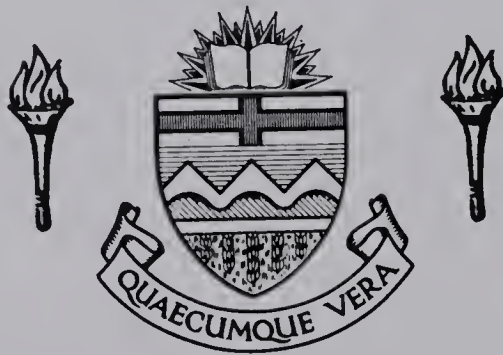


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THE POET AS HERO: THE HERO ARCHETYPE IN ROMANTIC POETRY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Poet as Hero: The Hero Archetype in Romantic Poetry" submitted by June Rosemary McMaster in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.





## ABSTRACT

Using as a frame of reference Jung's theory of the mythic contents of the collective unconscious, this thesis traces, in a number of major poems of the Romantic period concerned with heroic figures, the recurrence of motifs which, according to Jung and his disciples in the field of myth-interpretation, occur universally both in the "monomyth" of the hero and in the dreams of individuals. It attempts at the same time to demonstrate a correspondence between these motifs and certain phases, or "rites de passage," occurring in the poet's own spiritual or "psychological" development. On the basis of this correspondence it is proposed that the act of composition was for the Romantic poet not an end in itself but his principal means of expressing his impulse toward self-discovery and self-creation. Because in acting out this impulse in the ritual dance of words the poet can profoundly affect the society of which he is a part, he is himself a new transformation of the hero as a spiritual leader.

Wordsworth is considered first because within the terms in which Romantic poetry is discussed he provides a key to the reading of the other poets. The Prelude is unique in revealing that an individual's temporal life viewed against its archetypal background is itself the enactment of a myth. Shelley's life was the enactment of the myth of the hero-son's relationship to the father image, a myth which finds its transpersonal expression in the relationship between his mythic heroes and the tyrants of which they felt themselves to be the victims. Keats enacted and related the myth of the journey to the centre of the soul, wherein dwells the "awful goddess," the "Self," who demands the sacrifice of the ego.



It is proposed that Keats represents the most radical transformation of the poet-hero because he was more conscious than the others of the process of self-transformation and the role of poetry in it.

Each of these poets was attempting in his own way to cope with a crisis in mankind's spiritual evolution, the alienation of the conscious mind from the unconscious, or of the intellect from the soul, a crisis which post-Romantic man has not yet safely passed.



And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind  
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew  
On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,  
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;  
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,  
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,  
And changed to all which once they dared not be,  
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,  
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,  
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,  
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Shelley, Prometheus Unbound





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## PART ONE: THE MONOMYTH OF THE HERO



## CHAPTER I

### ROMANTICISM AND MYTH

#### I

Romantic thought itself justifies a reading of Romantic poetry that draws upon the insights of depth-psychology and the disciplines it has influenced, for the theory of the "mythic" contents of the "collective unconscious" constitutes the re-emergence in a new form of Romantic metaphysics. From Akenside to Keats the Romantics expressed, in both prose and poetry, a concern with states of mind, or levels of perception, such as Blake's "Two Contrary States of the Human Soul," "innocence" and "experience"; with transformations in consciousness, such as DeQuincey hoped to achieve with opium; and with the hierarchy of mental faculties and the roles of "reason," "understanding" and "imagination," such as we find in the metaphysical and aesthetic speculations of Shelley and Coleridge. Indeed, the relationship between, on the one hand, speculation about the nature and processes of the psyche, and on the other, the great mythological traditions which the major poets assimilated and recreated in an attempt to give voice to their intuited psychological insights might almost be said to constitute the definition of Romanticism. Myth, whether private or collective, provided the major Romantic poets with a language of symbol by means of which they could structure their visions of a "psychic world," to borrow Jung's term. Gifted with both keenly rational minds and strong religious instincts--or with both intelligence and imagination--they faced the challenge facing





all such well endowed individuals, that of bringing about a dynamic and creative dialectic between, on the one hand, the conscious processes of the mind--what Coleridge called "understanding" and Shelley, "reason"--and, on the other, "the unconscious," that is, "the unknown as it immediately affects us,"<sup>1</sup> in order to effect a transformation of consciousness.

That such is also the professed goal of the youngest school of analytical psychology, existential psychotherapy, makes the mythopoeic literature of the Romantic period especially relevant to the preoccupations of modern man, who has had thrust upon him by the events of the last two centuries an inescapable awareness of his "alienated" or schizoid state, an awareness that Viktor Frankl calls an "existential neurosis."<sup>2</sup> The alienated individual has, indeed, become the intellectual cliché of this century. The present decade, however, is witnessing a re-emergence of the Romantic faith in the teleological significance of this very alienation, that is, in the possibility that the split between what man is and what he dreams of being provides the very tension necessary for creative evolution.

The dynamic and organic nature of the psyche with its consequent potential for such evolution is a central tenet of both Romanticism and modern depth-psychology. Indeed, the concern throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the role of the imagination in the creative process heralded the modern interest in the creative role of the unconscious. Although the early Romantic, Mark Akenside, can be called an inheritor of the Platonic tradition in his distinction between a matter-of-fact world and



an intellectual world of "Eternal Form" (I, 574), he can just as accurately be called a forerunner of Jung, who likewise distinguishes between a world that exists at the analytical level of perception and the deeper abode of the "archetypes." For both writers the artist is the mediator between the two realms: he is the visionary who "strips the veil of familiarity from the world"<sup>3</sup> and, in Blakean terminology, traces the "lineaments" of the "Eternal Forms," thus making them accessible to the light of consciousness. Akenside, like Shelley, sees the artist's task as that of rescuing the eternal forms from the temporal processes of nature:

to purify the form  
From matter's gross communion; to secure  
For ever, from the meddling hand of Change,  
Or rude Decay, her features.  
(The Pleasures of Imagination, I, 641-644).

Shelley echoes the same thought in his famous assertion that poetry "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."<sup>4</sup> He makes it explicit, furthermore, that these "visitations" come from a realm other than the conscious: "Poetry differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the controul [sic] of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence has [sic] no necessary connexion with consciousness or will."<sup>5</sup> The "two classes of mental action" which Shelley calls "reason and imagination"<sup>6</sup> have the same characteristics respectively as "the two kinds of thinking" that Jung calls "directed thinking" and "fantasy thinking."<sup>7</sup> In opposing poetry to consciousness and will, furthermore, Shelley points to the same psychic phenomenon in the creative process which Jung describes metaphorically in "On the Relation of Analytical



Psychology to Poetry" when he says, "the poet's hand is seized and his pen writes things that his mind contemplates in amazement."<sup>8</sup>

Paradise Lost, which according to Milton's own testimony was "dictated" to him, is the example of this phenomenon that occurs to Shelley,<sup>9</sup> but he might have as appropriately cited Blake's Jerusalem, the opening lines of which describe the figure of the Saviour "Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words of this mild song" (Pl.4, 1.5).

The autonomous nature of inspiration, personified traditionally as the Muse, has remained one of the most elusive and baffling enigmas in the history of literary criticism. While the term "psychology" appears rarely in English Romantic criticism and aesthetics, speculations about such psychological mysteries seem to have been constantly exercising Romantic writers and intellectuals. At least one romantic critic explicitly asserts the need to enlist the cooperation of the younger discipline in formulating a Romantic poetic. In his essay on Wordsworth, DeQuincey complains, "in the sense of absolute and philosophic criticism, we have little or none; for, before that can exist, we must have a good psychology, whereas, at present, we have none at all."<sup>10</sup>

Coleridge's metaphysics, however, constitute what might be called a Romantic depth-psychology. The distinctions which he makes between "reason" and "understanding,"<sup>11</sup> between "imagination" and "fancy,"<sup>12</sup> between "principles" and "facts"<sup>13</sup> are surely aspects of the more general distinction Jung makes between "unconscious" and "conscious." When Coleridge speaks of religious perception lying







"below his own consciousness,"<sup>14</sup> or of his search "for a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists,"<sup>15</sup> the relevance of Jung's theory of an impersonal unconscious and its archetypal contents becomes immediately apparent. Both Coleridge and Jung belong to the German transcendental tradition of Kant and Schelling, to whom we know Coleridge was indebted for certain habits of thought<sup>16</sup> and who we can be sure were encompassed by Jung's vast philosophical erudition. Kant's insistence on "a priori principles of knowledge" and his distinction between "finite thinking" and an intellectus archetypus<sup>17</sup> surely form the roots of Jung's metaphysical dualism, and the division between unconscious and conscious, and their respective roles in the creative process as formulated by Schelling, "whose ambition it was to complete the transcendental philosophy,"<sup>18</sup> furthermore, is a distinct forerunner of Jung's theory of the "transcendent function."

The special relevance of Jung and his school for a study of the Romantic poets, therefore, is that like them he belongs to, or at least has been strongly influenced by, that tradition of transcendental philosophy which developed and continues to survive as a reaction against a mechanistic positivism which seems to threaten the validity of the "soul," the term that has been traditionally applied to that elusive element in human personality which refuses to be pinioned by "reductive" philosophies. Jung's break with Freud can be regarded as an expression of such a reaction. Freud's mechanistic sexual determinism was unacceptable to Jung for the same reason that eighteenth-century associationist psychology was



unacceptable to Coleridge:<sup>19</sup> it threatened a faith in the psyche as an organic, teleological and irreducible process, and it failed to recognize empirical reality as an illusion, or, at most, a symbolic analogy of that order of reality which Jung calls the "surreal" or the "psychic world."<sup>20</sup>

## II

Concern with the unconscious, primitive, or archaic processes of the psyche provides a common ground for inter-action not only between romantic theory and modern psychology, but among all those disciplines concerned with the origins, nature and function of myths and symbols. If archetypal criticism leads us away from purely "literary" concerns, as its detractors charge it tends to do, so much the better. The student of Romanticism has a special obligation to apply the insights of related disciplines to an interpretation of its poetry. To limit himself to "literary" matters is to betray the Romantic poets, for Imagination as they conceived it, and according to the claims they made for its power, is no confined, fragmented concept but the very "principle of synthesis"<sup>21</sup> itself; it is "Reason in her most exalted mood" (Prelude, XIII, 170); it is the "sacred power of self-intuition."<sup>22</sup> Poetry, furthermore, is "at once the center and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred."<sup>23</sup> The "central concern" of Romantic metaphysics, of which Imagination is the cornerstone, is "the act and evolution of self-consciousness."<sup>24</sup> Self-knowledge is the supreme "science" which poetry "comprehends,"



and in the figures and motifs of myth, whether they arose spontaneously from the artist's private fantasies or were assimilated from the stream of tradition, the Romantic poet found a living language of symbol in which to make accessible to the race his advances to new levels of self-awareness.

In Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry

Douglas Bush, while somewhat conservative in the high value he places on the Hellenic tradition as a source of ready-made mythological material, recognizes that the revival of the Elizabethan interest in Greek myth was, paradoxically, motivated by a loss of the ethical, literary and religious authority of tradition, and by the resulting necessity to find new answers through private and personal revelation.<sup>25</sup> That many of the Romantics found traditional myth capable of bearing the weight of "things invisible" is central to Bush's argument. Even Wordsworth, he notes, who shared the eighteenth-century antipathy to classical allusion, came to value the natural piety and religious imagination revealed in Greek myth. Indeed, from Wordsworth, says Bush, the younger Romantics inherited "a noble and poetic conception of mythology as a treasury of symbols rich enough to embody not only the finest sensuous experience but the highest aspirations of man."<sup>26</sup>

From a different orientation, a practising psychiatrist's explanation of the universal attraction that mythic themes have for the poet scarcely diverges from that of Bush:

[Myths] are traditional vehicles of collective values. They represent the epitomized reactions of the human psyche to oft-repeated crises, needs and longings in the long tale of human experience. The history of man's development, the benevolent and malign forces which have attended his spiritual adventures, the necessities which





have driven and the aspirations which have prompted him, are to be found in the myths. Because they are full of the very essence of our common humanity, surviving myths of past cultures have always attracted the poetical genius, and many of the ancient myths have thus been handed down to us as immortal epics. . . . [The] poets who are attracted to mythology would find little interest in all this raw material if it did not contain the living stuff of human experience.<sup>27</sup>

As such a passage demonstrates, the aesthetics inherent in depth-psychology reveal important parallels with Romantic aesthetics.

Jung's theory of the "collective," "racial" or "impersonal" unconscious has now become part of popular academic lore, so that a brief explanation of its aesthetic implications will serve here: According to Jung the deepest, oldest and hence most obscure part of the psyche, a level lying below even the "personal unconscious" posited by Freud, is a deposit of all human experience right back to its beginnings, comprising a kind of supra-individual psyche where all personal experience is "depersonalized" and "appears sub specie aeternitas."<sup>28</sup> "The collective unconscious," he says, "contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution."<sup>29</sup> There is, furthermore, in Jung's view, a teleological process at work in the racial psyche by which these unconscious contents are perpetually emerging into consciousness in the form of "mnemonic images" or "archetypal symbols," to point the way to future development. This process, by which the unconscious becomes conscious through the language of symbol acting as the mediator, Jung calls "the transcendent function,"<sup>30</sup> and he equates it by implication with "active imagination." In thus giving imagination a positive and creative value Jung shows himself to be an inheritor of the Romantic tradition.





Again, Jung's concept of "symbol" is not inconsistent with the theory and practice of the Romantic poets, particularly Coleridge, who defines symbol as "a throwing together" of that which is present and that which is not,<sup>31</sup> and as "characterized by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal."<sup>32</sup> Similarly for Jung a symbol has no known referent either in empirical reality or in the personal unconscious, because it is an attempt to express the mystery of the unknown, that is, "something for which no verbal concept yet exists."<sup>33</sup> That "something" is one of the "archetypes," a term Jung is careful to distinguish from archetypal representations or images, because the archetype per se is "irrepresentable."<sup>34</sup> It is precisely because no verbal concepts for the archetypes exist that Jung has such difficulty making himself understood in discursive language. The best he can do is speak of "a priori patterns," "inborn possibilities" or even "instincts," using the latter term in a sense no biologist would accept. In his last book, published after his death, Man and His Symbols, which is an attempt to clarify for popular consumption theories which in his previous writings proved too esoteric for the lay reader, he tries again to make discursive prose do the impossible, and confuses still further the distinction between "archetype" and "archetypal image":

Here I must clarify the relation between instincts and archetypes: What we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world--even where transmission by direct descent or "cross fertilization" through migration must be ruled out.<sup>35</sup>



It is in using the term "archetype" and "myth motif" synonymously, however, that Jung paved the way for the formulation of theories of myth that have important relevance for the study of the kind of literary works to which Jung himself refers as "visionary," those "which rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow a glimpse into the unfathomable abyss of the unborn and things yet to be."<sup>36</sup> Vision of this order requires "mythological imagery" to give it form, and "what appears in the vision is the imagery of the collective unconscious."<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere he says simply, "The unconscious evidently likes to express itself mythologically."<sup>38</sup>

Since nowhere does Jung systematically elaborate this original insight into a fully formulated theory of myth, it remained for his disciples in his own and related disciplines to make the attempt. One of the most important of Jung's followers, Erich Neumann, has formulated a theory that myth is the history of the creative evolution of consciousness, arguing that the consciousness of both the race and the individual passes through "archetypal stages" which can be traced in myth. He sets out to show that "a series of archetypes is a main constituent of mythology, that they stand in an organic relation to one another, and that their stadial succession determines the growth of consciousness."<sup>39</sup> Of particular relevance for a consideration of the hero archetype is his view that the hero myth embodies the struggle between the personal and the transpersonal, between the ego and the larger life from which it has become differentiated:





With the progressive individualization of humanity and its emergence from the inchoate state of participation mystique the ego of each man takes on clearer definition; but in the process, the individual becomes the hero and has in his turn to exemplify the myth of the dragon fight.

It must be emphasized yet again that the mythological fate of the hero portrays the archetypal fate of the ego and of all conscious development. It serves as a model for the subsequent development of the collective, and its stages are recapitulated in the development of every child.<sup>40</sup>

In Mythology of the Soul another Jungian psychologist, H.G. Baynes, illustrates from the dreams and drawings of individuals this same close parallel between the "archetypal stages" of development that can be traced through the phantasy life of an individual, and those of the great cultural myths. A "mythological drama," he says, must be re-enacted in the psyche of each individual in order that he may discover "the impersonal aspect of his psychology, which is the root and foundation of his whole psychic life."<sup>41</sup> Characteristically of the school of analytical psychology to which he belongs, Baynes is not compelled by the Freudian's fear of the occult to explain away the religious implications of his science, if indeed psychiatry at this level is any longer a science. He calls the individual myth "the indispensable psychical container as well as the inexhaustible vessel of spiritual nourishment for those who can no longer trust themselves unquestioningly to collective forms,"<sup>42</sup> and declares, "The myth contains and enfolds the religious experience of mankind. . . . Let the intellect not deride the emotional evidence of the myth."<sup>43</sup> The role which Baynes assigns to the hero, especially, tends to be more religious than psychological, insofar as such a distinction has any validity:



The gods are the eternal archetypes, the primordial images of the general unconscious, the unmanifest, timeless potential of the human mind. The hero symbolizes the emergence in time and space, of this latent reserve of power. . . . In the figures of god and hero, therefore, we can recognize two psychical factors which have played the principal roles in the great cultural mythologies--viz., the unmanifest potential and the manifest kinetic aspect of the emergent moment. But no sooner have we stated their connection in this way than we recognize a parallel relationship between the unmanifest and the manifest, the divine and the human aspects of God, in the great religions of the world.<sup>44</sup>

To Joseph Campbell, however, we owe the fullest elaboration of the psychological, religious and aesthetic implications of the findings of Freud, Jung and their followers, who, he says, "have demonstrated irrefutably that the logic, the heroes, and the deeds of myth survive into modern times."<sup>45</sup> To the "one, shapeshifting yet marvellously constant story"<sup>46</sup> found in the great religions of the world, in the great cultural myths, and in the dreams of the individual, he gives the term "monomyth," a word coined by James Joyce.<sup>47</sup> To recognize the relevance of such a concept for Romantic poetics we need only turn to Shelley; "[All poems] are episodes to that great poem, which all poets, like the cooperating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world," and history itself consists of "episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of men. The Past, like an inspired rhapsodist, fills the theatre of everlasting generations with their harmony."<sup>48</sup>

The concept of the monomyth, formulated by Shelley a century before it was fully elaborated by Campbell, derives its empirical evidence from a discipline that has reached maturity only since the Romantic period. Frazer's The Golden Bough and the works it has influenced in the field of myth and ritual provide the literary





scholar with invaluable support in his attempts to understand the nature of the mythopoeic process. Of most relevance are the apparent universality of certain patterns of rite among widely diversified cultures, and the possible connection between rite and myth. Denying that myth is an interpretation of either historical fact or natural phenomenon, Lord Raglan insists that "a myth is a story told in connection with a rite . . . performed for the benefit of and in the presence of a body of worshippers."<sup>49</sup> After analysing a series of hero myths and finding twenty elements common to them all, he observes that "the incidents fall definitely into three groups--those connected with the hero's birth, those connected with his accession to the throne, and those connected with his death. They thus correspond to the three principal rites de passage . . . ."<sup>50</sup> A later scholar of primitive ritual, A. Van Gennep, again speaks of "the schema of the rites of passage," composed of the ceremonies accompanying an individual's "life crises."<sup>51</sup> The "underlying arrangement," or "typical pattern," of these is "always the same,"<sup>52</sup> he says, and "relates the stages of human existence to those of plant and animal life and, by a sort of pre-scientific divination, joins them to the great rhythms of the universe."<sup>53</sup>

The inter-dependence, in the area of myth and ritual, of the two disciplines we have been discussing--that is, anthropology and psychology--is illustrated by Charles Aldrich's The Primitive Mind and Modern Civilization, in which the author argues that civilized man can uncover and bring to light the deepest layers of his own nature by recognizing the universality of certain patterns or tendencies in the human psyche:



Freud and Jung, and all the host of minor writers upon the phenomena of conscious and unconscious psychic activities, constantly refer to a man who represents the common stuff of human nature. They call him the primitive. Upon him as upon a foundation various savage, barbarous and civilized cultures have grown, diverting his interests and altering his manners; but he himself survives unchanged.<sup>54</sup>

The study of this universal man is the business of both psychology and anthropology, and indeed demands their cooperation, for as Malinowski points out in the Introduction to Aldrich's book (xiii) the central tenet of depth-psychology, the theory of the racial unconscious, is dependent on anthropology for its evidence. I venture to add that archetypal criticism is dependent on them both.

Philosophy, which has the advantages over the younger disciplines of both the respectability of age and the more comprehensive perspective, has also begun to take an interest in the archaic mind for the sake of the light it can throw on the metaphysical and aesthetic problems of modern man. In The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man H. and H.A. Frankfort argue that myth "is to be taken seriously, because it reveals a significant, if unverifiable truth--we might say a metaphysical truth."<sup>55</sup> Susanne Langer, too, insists on the "truth" of myth, because it is a structure of "subjective symbols,"<sup>56</sup> and "symbolism is the recognized key to that mental life which is characteristically human and above the level of sheer animality."<sup>57</sup> She speaks of a "basic process in the human brain which may be called symbolic transformation of experience,"<sup>58</sup> and of "the stream of symbols which constitutes the human mind."<sup>59</sup> Myth is one of the forms of this symbolic transformation and its "perfected and final form" is poetry, embodying "the supreme concepts of life . . .





by which men orient themselves religiously in the cosmos."<sup>60</sup>

While Langer may be said to be approaching a psychological matter--that is, "the essentially transformational nature of human understanding"<sup>61</sup>--from the point of view of philosophy, John M.

Thorburn reverses the perspective in Art and the Unconscious:

A Psychological Approach to a Problem of Philosophy, and considers

"how far the problem of art and the sources of its inspiration may be re-stated in the light of those discoveries of contemporary psychology which centre round what has been called, significantly enough, the Unconscious."<sup>62</sup> Although not directly concerned with myth, he sees poetic genius as archaic in nature:

. . . the poet's genius must lead him to those recollections of an ancient world where his 'archetypal' inheritance will most entirely sustain and reinforce his 'traditional' inheritance. When Keats is able to hear, and once more to articulate, that "large utterance of the early gods," it is because the burden of the antique pressed upon him not only from the outside and by way of the studious enrichment of his experience, but also because the antique spirit burdened him from within and by way of a peculiarly strong inheritance of that spirit in its 'archetypal' form. Hyperion would have given him deliverance from the burden had he been able more completely to effect a union of the inner inheritance with the external forms of his experience. The harmonization of the inner with the outer thus becomes at least one of the formulae through which we can have some access to the secret of poetic genius.<sup>63</sup>

### III

Whatever the perspective from which one considers this "archetypal inheritance"--literary, psychological, anthropological, or philosophical--the symbol, the myth, and the image are, according to Mircea Eliade, "the very substance of the spiritual life."<sup>64</sup>

While Thorburn says that "the inscrutable shapes and divine phantoms of art are recognized at last by their kinship with 'The Unconscious,'"<sup>65</sup>



Eliade acknowledges an equal indebtedness to analytical psychology for revealing the close correspondence between the contents of the individual unconscious as revealed in dream and phantasy, and what he calls "the immemorial existential situations"<sup>66</sup> revealed in myth:

By directing attention to the survival of symbols and mythical themes in the psyche of modern man, by showing that the spontaneous rediscovery of the archetypes of archaic symbolism is a common occurrence in all human beings, irrespective of race and historical surroundings, depth-psychology has freed the historian of religions from his last hesitations.<sup>67</sup>

Depth-psychology can do as much for the literary critic who accepts its implied re-affirmation of the link between poetry and religion that Shelley recognized when he called poets "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration."<sup>68</sup> Poetry and religion are both products of the mythopoeic process, and analytical psychology, in cooperation with related disciplines, can lead us toward an increasingly conscious understanding of that process.

The literary critic, therefore, is obliged to embrace the "profane" as well as the "sacred," and, hopefully, maintain a creative dialectic between them. Starting with a psychological hypothesis in Archetypal Patterns in Poetry and finding "no distinction between religious and poetic faith,"<sup>69</sup> Maud Bodkin then proceeds in Studies of Type Images to do for religion what her earlier book has done for poetry, in the belief that the more universal ideas or patterns underlying religious doctrine are "God-given" and that "their evolution into greater clarity and relevance to life is part of the divine intention for man."<sup>70</sup> Even Northrop Frye, who insists, throughout the "Polemical Introduction" to Anatomy of Criticism,





on the autonomy of literary criticism as a systematic discipline in its own right with a conceptual framework bearing the same relationship to poetry as physics does to nature, concedes that, "When poet and critic pass from the archetypal to the anagogic phase, they enter a phase of which only religion, or something as infinite in its range as religion, can possibly form an external goal."<sup>71</sup>

Maud Bodkin and Northrop Frye, the principal exponents of the archetypal, or "mythopoeic" school of literary criticism, agree then on the religious nature of "the external goal" of their mythopoetics, but while Frye regards Jung's theory of the collective unconscious as "an unnecessary hypothesis in literary criticism"<sup>72</sup> and defines an archetype as "a typical or recurring image,"<sup>73</sup> that is, a conventional image derived from one's cultural heritage, Bodkin believes that depth-psychology can enrich literary insights by suggesting, as an explanation for the special emotional significance we find in certain poems, the possible existence of a correspondence between the patterns of imagery and symbol embodied in the poems and "a priori determinants"<sup>74</sup> in the mind of the reader which the poetry enables him to recognize. Poetry then acts as the mediating agent by which the mind knows itself. One's recognition of, and identification with, the pattern of tragic poetry, for example, a pattern of tension between individual aspiration for power and the counter claims of the universal Self demanding the sacrifice of the individual, amounts to a religious experience in which "something is present corresponding to the emotional meaning that belonged to ancient ritual undertaken for the renewal of the life of the tribe."<sup>75</sup>



Just as Susanne Langer sees poetry as the final embodiment of myth, Bodkin sees it as also a highly sophisticated ritual, as "the rhythmic dance of words."<sup>76</sup>

"Myth" and "ritual" are important terms in Frye's critical organon too. In Anatomy of Criticism "myth" is the first of the five "modes" into which fictional literature may be divided according to the degree to which the hero's "power of action" transcends or falls below the reality of mortal limits.<sup>77</sup> When heroes are gods we have "undisplaced myth,"<sup>78</sup> the patterns of which, nevertheless, are implicit in other kinds of literature as well. The "mythical phase," in which dream conflicts with reality, is relegated to a level of vision below "the anagogical phase," that is, the phase of "apocalyptic revelation" where all dichotomies and conflicts cease to have meaning.<sup>79</sup> If "real are the dreams of gods" (Lamia, I, 127), a poem concerned with divine beings would, according to Frye's critical system, belong to the mythical "mode" but would transcend the mythical "phase."

It is this kind of intellectual Gordian knot that tends to make one skeptical of the wisdom of separating poetics from "the direct experience of literature" as physics is separated from the direct experience of nature. Frye's misgivings about subjective experience are, ironically, anti-Romantic, because for the Romantics (as for Jung) subjective experience involving an integrated response on all levels of perception is the only experience that is not illusory. This is not to deny the place of the rational and the objective in criticism, or to challenge Rene Wellek's statement that



"Literary theory, an organon of methods, is the great need of literary scholarship today,"<sup>80</sup> But surely criticism betrays the Romantic poets themselves, if it fails to take into account the "direct experience," the confrontation of the reader's soul with the soul of the poem. If what happens in this experience depends on what has first happened to the poet in writing the poem, then it is the critic's responsibility to understand the creative process as it is embodied in the poem.

Fifteen years after the publication of Anatomy of Criticism Frye turns his attention to the relationship between the poet and the creative power by which he is moved, and to the "deeper consciousness"<sup>81</sup> where creative activity takes place. He speaks of a profound change that characterized the Romantic movement "in the spatial projection of reality"<sup>82</sup> from out and up to in and down; that is, the "spatial metaphor" for identity shifts from the firmament to a centre deep within the psyche. His latest work, A Study of English Romanticism, a fuller elaboration of this thesis--namely, that in Romanticism "the main direction of the quest of identity tends increasingly to be downward and inward, toward a hidden basis or ground of identity between man and nature"<sup>83</sup>--leads him inevitably in the direction of depth-psychology, and we find him giving at least a passing nod to "archetypes in a Jungian sense."<sup>84</sup>

The influence of depth-psychology is evident to some extent in Wellek's criticism too. Summing up his survey of Romantic scholarship he says: "In all of these studies, however diverse in method and emphasis, a convincing agreement has been reached: they





all see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth, and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavour to overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious,"<sup>85</sup> and in an earlier work, in which Wellek collaborated with Austin Warren, he says, "Any modern treatment of the creative process will chiefly concern the relative parts played by the unconscious and the conscious mind."<sup>86</sup> Again, "the literary student should turn his attention to the concrete problem not yet solved or even adequately discussed: the question of how ideas actually enter into literature."<sup>87</sup>

Jung's theory of the "transcendent function" operating in the creative process seems to me the most fruitful approach to this problem in our time. If Wellek's statement about the nature of poetry, that in it ideas "cease to be ideas in the ordinary sense of concepts and become symbols, or even myths,"<sup>88</sup> is true, then poetry is both the product and the vehicle of the mediating process that Jungian depth-psychology describes at great length. Because Jung recognizes that the process leads to "a living third thing," that it is "a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation,"<sup>89</sup> the Jungian critic escapes the danger ascribed to Freudian readings of poetry, that of "reducing" the work of art to a symptom of the poet's neurosis, or at best to a product of his personal unconscious. For Jung the poet is "collective man,"<sup>90</sup> and it is his "primordial experience" as collective man which he embodies in his art. As Jung explains in "The Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry":





The individual man cannot use his powers to the full unless he is aided by one of those collective representations we call ideals, which releases all the hidden forces of instinct that are inaccessible to his conscious will. . . . The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating this image into the finished work.<sup>91</sup>

The elaboration into the finished work defines the relationship and the distinction between dream and art which has long been a concern of aesthetics. If "elaboration" is an accurate term, then a consideration of the work of art must begin with what is being elaborated, that is, with those contents of the poet's unconscious that are reaching toward consciousness in dream and fantasy. Unhappily, many critics who have assimilated the insights of depth-psychology tend to see art as merely a form of dream. In an essay entitled "Myth, Dream, and Poem," Herbert Read says:

It is tempting to identify poetry and the dream; or shall we say, to avoid qualifications of a technical and linguistic nature, the imagination and the dream. Freud has found it necessary to distinguish between various stages or degrees of dream activity, and it is with the most superficial level, which we call daydreaming, that he tends to identify the poetic imagination. At the same time he would be willing to admit that the myth, the dream which has become valid for a whole people, has a significance which reaches into the very depth of the unconscious. Jung, who has dealt much more fully with this aspect of the myth, has found it necessary to suppose the existence of a racial psyche from which the myth is precipitated into the individual mind of the poet. . . . There is not . . . any clear distinction between the dream and the work of art, for the more we examine the history of art, the more evident it becomes that the works of art which survive are those which most nearly approach to the illogical order of the dream. . . . [Those] works of art which are irrational and dreamlike--legendary myths and folktales and the poems which embody them--these survive all economic and political changes, the transmigration of peoples and the metamorphosis of language. They are told and retold in every age and every climate, and though modified in detail, are always essentially the same, irrational and superreal, significant beyond their immediate meaning.<sup>92</sup>

To say there is no clear distinction between dream and art leaves the



execution of the dream or vision entirely out of account, but Read rightly emphasizes the dream-like nature of great works of literature, those of the kind Jung calls "sublime" or "visionary" because they "rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow a glimpse into the unfathomable abyss of the unborn and things yet to be."<sup>93</sup>

That the Romantic poets were themselves aware of the close relationship between the dream and the poem may explain why both Keats and Shelley, in their last poems, reverted to the form of the mediaeval dream-vision, as did Bunyan before them in the same tradition, the Protestant visionary tradition, which it was their aim to rejuvenate. At the beginning of "The Triumph of Life" Shelley describes the transition from a conscious, waking state into that partially unconscious trance-like state in which he experiences a "waking-dream" (42); while Keats, in "The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream," describes his resistance to falling into successively deeper levels of dream or trance. Well aware, however, that it is not the dream per se but its "melodious utterance" which qualifies him as a poet, Keats makes explicit the distinction that Herbert Read has failed to make:

For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,--  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the sable chain  
And dumb enchantment (I, 8-11).

Keats is here using "dream" synonymously with "imagination." If we accept his identification of dream with imagination and also the tenet of depth-psychology that myths are "the age-long dreams of





young humanity" emerging from "the oldest layers of the human mind,"<sup>94</sup> then we are led to the conclusion that imagination is the myth-making faculty. Read explains the function of the poet as myth-maker thus:

. . . we may observe that the farther science penetrates into the mystery of life, the more it reverts to a mythological world. I refer more particularly to the science of the individual psyche, where all science culminates; for we know nothing unless we know ourselves. And the more we learn about ourselves by the objective methods of observation and analysis, the more we realize that our knowledge is already crystallized in the ancient myths. . . . Myths that were dead are now alive again, and it may be that in the course of time all the old gods and heroes, that for centuries peopled and pacified the minds of men, return and resume their symbolic functions . . . . [The] poet is a man who creates his own myths. But we must ask, by what process does such a myth, the unique creation of an individual, come into being? We say that the poet is inspired, or possessed. He is no longer in his right mind, but is visited by voices that come, it seemed once from the sky but we now say from deep within the self. A man's right mind--by that we mean his conscious mind. When he is not in his right mind, then he is in another mind--a mind which from the point of view of the imaginative life is the mythical mind.<sup>95</sup>

All those disciplines which have concerned themselves with myth, including Romantic literary criticism itself, agree that myth is to be taken seriously as a form of truth and that it originates as a power or process which the Romantics called "imagination" and the depth-psychologists "the unconscious." When Coleridge, in distinguishing between Reason and Understanding, speaks of "Mightier powers . . . than the mere understanding can comprehend,"<sup>96</sup> he seems to imply the existence of a dynamic "unconscious" or "mythical mind." This mind is revealed in Scriptural "histories," or what we now call "myths"; these "are the living educts of the imagination; of that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanent and self-circling energies of the reason,





gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors."<sup>97</sup>

We may define myth, then, as the "history" in symbolic language of a dynamic and creative encounter between the conscious "understanding" and a power which both transcends and nourishes it.



## CHAPTER II

### THE HERO AND HIS TRANSFORMATIONS

#### I

The central figure of the monomyth is the hero, "that greater man who is semi-divine by nature."<sup>1</sup> Encompassing both human and divine he looms against a cosmic background inhabited by the gods from whom he descended. Underlying his birth, ordeal, and death is a universal pattern in which men in all times and places have felt a sacred significance. The meaning of "the universal hero myth,"<sup>2</sup> as Jung calls it, is not to be found in allegorical interpretations, that is, not in one-to-one relationships between the contents of the myth and natural, sociological or psychological phenomena, but in "identity," or what Frye calls "the radical form of metaphor."<sup>3</sup>

In the previous chapter mention was made of the relationship between myth and rite. Throughout mythological scholarship runs the implication that the meaning of the hero figure is to be found in this relationship, that both myth and rite are attempts to re-establish a lost "identity" between, on the one hand, internal developmental processes and external cosmic processes, whether the latter be regarded as natural or super-natural, and between, on the other hand, "the one and the many," the individual and mankind. The function of both myth and rite, according to Erich Neumann, for example, is to establish an identity between the inner "transformations" of the individual psyche and the outer transformations both of the



natural world and of the race, and hence to unite humanity with something "not merely natural,"<sup>4</sup> that is, with the divine. Both myth and rite appear to be attempts to make human existence sacred through identification of the individual with the race, in the hero as cosmic man. "Identification with the cult-hero"<sup>5</sup> underlies the transformation experience of rite, according to Jung, and the cult-hero and the mythic hero tend to merge into the same figure:

The universal hero myth . . . always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death. The narration or ritual repetition of sacred texts and ceremonies, and the worship of such a figure with dances, music, hymns, prayers, and sacrifices, grip the audience with numinous emotions (as if with magic spells) and exalt the individual to an identification with the hero.<sup>6</sup>

The human need to identify with the macrocosm and, through it, with the divine may explain why the hero usually symbolizes a natural or cosmic phenomenon at the same time that he shares the attributes of both men and gods. For example, he is often associated with the sun.

H.G. Baynes describes the identity thus:

The relation between god and hero is an intimate one, the hero being frequently the son of the god. The hero-king was conceived to be a child of the sun, his mother being impregnated by the sun in human shape . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Mythologically, the hero is the sun or, at least, the child of the sun; hence he represents the celestial powers; he is an aspect of deity.<sup>7</sup>

The most universally familiar example of this cosmic god-man is to be found in "the story of the sun hero who, having been devoured by the monster, is carried under the sea in the monster's belly to the eastern ocean, where he once more emerges rejuvenated and victorious."<sup>8</sup>





Jung makes frequent reference to this myth. In Symbols of Transformation he tells us that in the course of digging into "the historical layers of the psyche," he "uncovered a buried idol, the sun-hero, 'young, comely, with glowing locks and fiery crown,' who, forever unattainable to mortal man, revolves round the earth, causing night to follow day, and winter summer, and death life, and who rises again in rejuvenated splendor to give light to new generations."<sup>9</sup>

A human need filled by the symbolic figure of the hero that is even more fundamental and compelling than the need to re-identify with the divine and cosmic processes from which the differentiated individual has become alienated is the need to identify with humanity as a whole. Hence the mythic hero is always Man, but Man potentially rather than manifestly:

The hero is the archetypal forerunner of mankind in general. His fate is the pattern in accordance with which the masses of humanity must live, and always have lived, however haltingly and distantly; and however short of the ideal man may have fallen, the stages of the hero myth have become constituent elements in the personal development of every individual.<sup>10</sup>

This aspect of the hero has special relevance for Shelley, for in "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends" (Preface to Prometheus Unbound), he seeks to present a heroic ideal that is valid for humanity as a whole. And for all his saying that didactic poetry is his "abhorrence," both the Preface to Prometheus Unbound and the work itself reveal that his purpose in creating the figure of Prometheus as the fulfilment of mankind's moral potential and final victory over darkness is to effect a moral



transformation in that "select class of poetical readers" who are capable of assimilating "beautiful idealisms of moral excellence."

Indeed, Neumann's description of the archetypal hero myth can be applied without qualification to Prometheus Unbound:

. . . the hero myth is never concerned with the private history of an individual, but always with some prototypal and transpersonal event of collective significance. . . . [The] victory and transformation of the hero are valid for all mankind; they are held up for our contemplation, to be lived out in our own lives, or at least are experienced by us.<sup>11</sup>

If we identify with the hero and live out these "prototypal" or "transpersonal" transformations in our own lives, then are we not ourselves heroes? "Why may not every one of us be a Hero?" asks Carlyle in Heroes and Hero-Worship.<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Sewell argues, in The Human Metaphor, that life itself is myth or the "primary" art form, that poetry is an interpretation of it, and that criticism, consequently, recedes into "some uncertain third place."<sup>13</sup> In a chapter entitled "Individual Life as Myth," she quotes Thomas Mann as saying, in a lecture on Freud, "One may as well say 'lived myth' as lived life."<sup>14</sup> She cites Mann's reference in the same lecture to Schopenhauer's belief in "apparent design in the fate of the individual,"<sup>15</sup> the implication being that individual life is an "artistic" creation of the imagination in much the same way as myth is, that it is indeed "myth, allegory, heroic poem." She goes on, "This is not to make life into literature. It is to make all lives potentially into naked heroic suffering encounters with the universe."<sup>16</sup>

Each of us is the hero of his own life--this is the recognition toward which the whole development of the hero myth has led, and among





the major Romantic poets it is Wordsworth, as we shall see, who in the Jungian sense was most "conscious" of it. If Shelley shows us the personal and moral meaning of the mythic or transpersonal, Wordsworth shows us the mythic or transpersonal significance of the personal.

To understand the hero myth as it is found in Romantic poetry one must, therefore, recognize it as the mediator between the inner and outer worlds, between the unconscious and the conscious, between the personal and the transpersonal. Depth-psychology helps us toward this recognition by linking mythological motifs with the fantasy life of the individual: "Modern psychology," says Jung, "has the distinct advantage of having opened up a field of psychic phenomena which are themselves the matrix of all mythology--I mean dreams, visions, fantasies, and delusional ideas";<sup>17</sup> and in another work he declares, "Modern psychology treats the products of unconscious fantasy-activity as self-portraits of what is going on in the unconscious, or as statements of the unconscious psyche about itself."<sup>18</sup> About the hero figure specifically he says "the hero symbolizes a man's unconscious self,"<sup>19</sup> or is "the higher personality who is an expression of the self."<sup>20</sup> In his last work, Man and His Symbols, one of his collaborators elaborates this suggestion into a fuller explanation of the significance of the hero figure:

The myth of the hero is the most common and the best known myth in the world. We find it in the classical mythology of Greece and Rome, in the Middle Ages, in the Far East, and among contemporary primitive tribes. It also appears in our dreams. It has an obvious dramatic appeal, and a less obvious, but nonetheless profound, psychological importance.

These hero myths vary enormously in detail, but the more closely





one examines them the more one sees that structurally they are very similar. They have, that is to say, a universal pattern, even though they were developed by groups or individuals without any direct cultural contact with each other--by, for instance, tribes of Africans or North American Indians, or the Greeks, or the Incas of Peru. Over and over again one hears a tale describing a hero's miraculous but humble birth, his early proof of super-human strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with forces of evil, his fallibility to the sin of pride (hybris), and his fall through betrayal or a "heroic" sacrifice that ends in his death.

I believe that this pattern has psychological meaning both for the individual, who is endeavoring to discover and assert his personality, and for a whole society, which has an equal need to establish its collective identity. . . . [The] essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness--his awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses--in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him.<sup>21</sup>

According to this theory, the poet in his role as mythmaker projects into mythic form his imaginative or "unconscious" psychic life, and by revealing each psychic process as "an ordeal in the life of the hero"<sup>22</sup> creates a healing identity with the transpersonal.

Maud Bodkin's reading of Paradise Lost is one of the few examples to be found in literary criticism of an interpretation of poetry based on the modern psychological explanation of the meaning and function of the hero figure. It is also one of the few readings of the poem to satisfactorily explain the baffling ambivalence of the figure of Satan, which so fascinated the Romantics it moved one of them to call Milton a member of "the Devil's party":

It comes to this, then, that we find in the Satan of Paradise Lost the same expressive function that was found to belong to the hero of tragic drama--to Hamlet and to King Lear. In the figure of Satan as hero, we may say, an objective form is given to the self of imaginative aspiration, or to the power craving, while the overthrow of Satan, and his humiliation as infernal serpent, satisfies the counter movement of feeling toward the surrender of personal claims and the merging of the ego within a greater power. . . . Our analysis of the figure of Satan if it be accepted, demonstrates a conflict



between passionate self-assertion and religious loyalty, dominating Milton's mind, and finding a reflection in his poem that sets vibrating the same factors in a like-minded reader.<sup>23</sup>

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that Shelley recognized in Milton's Satan "an imaginary being" akin to his own defiant hero and likewise "drawn from the operations of the human mind" (Preface to Prometheus Unbound).

## II

"Transformation" is a term that occurs with great frequency in studies of the hero myth. The career of the monomythic hero consists, it would seem, of a series of experiences each of which transforms him in such a way as to prepare him for a new "state," or for "re-birth" into a new life. Of central importance, therefore, is the experience which is a prerequisite of all others, that of birth itself, a motif which Otto Rank explores in The Myth of the Birth of the Hero. As Rank demonstrates,<sup>24</sup> a common phenomenon associated with the hero's birth is that he is soon thereafter separated from his original parents to be reared by foster parents of a lower order, as, for example, in the story of Oedipus; or he may have a heavenly father and an earthly mother, like Christ. Whichever the case his birth always symbolically suggests that while he is in the world he is not of it, that like Keats' Hyperion, he is "earth-born/And sky-engendered" (Hyperion, I, 309-310), or like Wordsworth's child figure he comes "From God, who is our home" to be cared for by "Earth" as her "Foster-child." In his discussion of this motif Neumann suggests that it is the conviction of having





descended from divine progenitors that gives the hero his sense of having a special destiny, of having been set apart for a special task.<sup>25</sup>

The theme of the divine child in Romantic literature is obvious enough not to need to be argued here. Its meanings are perhaps less obvious, but according to psychological interpretations of mythic motifs, it represents the original phase both of individual or ontogenetic development, and of the psychic development of the human race. Students of the primitive mind, whether religious historians, anthropologists, psychologists, or philosophers, agree that in the earliest stage of man's development he is not aware of himself as a separate, individual identity--that is, he has not yet developed "ego-consciousness." Erich Neumann explains this "original situation" thus:

The original situation . . . corresponds to the psychological stage in man's prehistory when the individual and the group, ego and unconscious, man and the world, were so indissolubly bound up with one another that the law of participation mystique, of unconscious identity, prevailed between them . . . . Although we know the original condition of things only as a borderline experience . . . with those parts of our psyche which are not our ego consciousness, we continue to participate in this archetypal stage.<sup>26</sup>

In the Romantic view this "archetypal stage," whether considered ontogenetically or phylogenetically, has a certain blessedness; the world is "apparelled in celestial light" or what a later Romantic called "transcendent wonder."<sup>27</sup> Carlyle's description of the mentality of the primitive "child-man" implies the same respect that is embodied in Wordsworth's famous reference to the "six-year's darling of a pigmy size" as the "best Philosopher": Carlyle speaks of "the





young generations of the world, who had in them the freshness of young children, and yet the depth of earnest men, who did not think that they had finished off all things in Heaven and Earth by merely giving them scientific names."<sup>28</sup> Because scientific man has lost the insight of this "ancient earnest soul,"<sup>29</sup> he says, prophets and poets are needed to restore it.

Depth-psychology has the same respect for the spiritual state symbolized by the child or primitive. "The primordial human being in us has a wisdom that we need,"<sup>30</sup> says H.G. Baynes. Charles Aldrich, too, claims to have found evidence that primitive man has a "natural" or "instinctual" moral wisdom based on the need of altruism for survival, and that with the development of ego-consciousness this instinctual wisdom was lost. He argues that the highest level of human development constitutes a conscious return to this "bio-morality":

The race tends to progress from unconsciousness toward consciousness and during this progression three stages may be seen: first, an unconscious bio-morality, in which the primitive members of any social group co-operate instinctively; second, a period of savagery, in which the rise of egotistic tendencies requires that the group shall force the members to conform to a norm of conventional morality; and third, a stage (not yet reached by any society, though many individuals in civilized societies have attained it) in which the members of the group consciously co-operate for the common good, and consciously restrain their egotistic desires in order to do so. The psychic life-history of every individual who reaches full individuality passes through these three phases of psychic development.<sup>31</sup>

The notion of the transition from unconsciousness to consciousness as a "fall" from an original blessed state is a favourite Romantic theme. As Frye observes, the Romantic myth is "the myth of the fall into self-consciousness."<sup>32</sup> The typical Romantic hero is characterized by nostalgia, a sense of having lost something which he



longs to recover. In order to recover it he separates himself from everything that is familiar, defies conventional authority and embarks on a difficult and hazardous quest. By meeting every challenge and overcoming every obstacle in his path he finally achieves his goal, the recovery of the lost treasure, "the treasure hard to attain," which may be the pearl of great price, the captive maiden, or, at the highest level of consciousness, his own soul.

The hero's career then can be seen as a kind of Hegelian triad in which the "thesis" is the state of "innocence" or unconsciousness or participation mystique, the "antithesis" is "experience," or ego-consciousness, or alienation, and the "synthesis" is a higher consciousness which encompasses both innocence and experience in a creative dialectic. The stages of the hero's life corresponding to these three mental states can be seen roughly as that of the child, who lives in protected and innocent bliss, that of the questing rebel, who alienates himself from his origins to find the treasure, and that of the king, who returns to his place of origin to assume his social and moral responsibilities. The fourth and final transformation is the surrender of kingly power in death, the sacrifice of the ego to the ongoing life force and to the larger life of humanity.

### III

In both the Freudian and the Jungian schools of myth interpretation, transformations in the hero's relationship with the parental imagos are central to the hero myth, for the hero cannot



achieve his goal, the winning of his own soul, without coming to terms with the masculine and feminine principles within himself. While the Oedipal myth has been re-interpreted and modified by Jung and his followers, it is to Freud that we owe the discovery of "the immortality of the Oedipus problem."<sup>33</sup> Briefly stated, the problem is that the developing male child has an unconscious longing to possess his mother, and a hostility toward his father. Mythologically these feelings are represented by the incest and patricide motifs, which a number of Freud's followers have explored at length. Since according to psychoanalysis<sup>34</sup> "the tragicomic triangle of the nursery"<sup>35</sup> is the source of myth, it might be fitting here to review briefly the contributions made by both the Freudian and Jungian schools to an understanding of this motif.

The Freudian school, defining myth as "a dream of the masses,"<sup>36</sup> tried as early as 1909 to demonstrate the validity of "the transference of the method and in part also of the results, of Freud's technique of dream interpretation to the myths."<sup>37</sup> The principal figures in this school are Karl Abraham, Ernest Jones and Otto Rank, all of whom concur in Abraham's view that "the myth is . . . part of the infantile mental life of the people that has survived, and the dream the myth of the individual . . . .The myth contains (in disguised form) the childhood wishes of the people."<sup>38</sup> Ernest Jones' name has become familiar in the literary world through his interpretation of the Hamlet "myth," in which he says:

. . . the resentment felt by a boy towards his father when the latter disturbs, as he necessarily must, his enjoyment of his mother's exclusive affection . . . is the deepest source of the world-old







conflict between father and son, between the younger and the older generation, the favourite theme of so many poets and writers, the central motif of most mythologies and religions.<sup>39</sup>

It is to Otto Rank, however, that we are indebted for first attempting "a psychological interpretation of myth on a large scale."<sup>40</sup> According to the theory he presents in The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, a myth is created by an individual as a symbolic account of the infantile career of his own ego:

In investing the hero with their own infantile history. . . [the mythmakers] identify themselves with him, as it were, claiming to have been similar heroes in their own personality. The true hero of the romance is, therefore, the ego, which finds itself in the hero, through its first heroic act, i.e., the revolt against the father. The ego can only find its own heroism in the days of infancy, and it is therefore obliged to invest the hero with its own revolt, crediting him with the features which made the ego a hero.<sup>41</sup>

The ego's revolt against the father in the Freudian "nursery romance" is motivated by "competition for the tender devotion and love of the mother."<sup>42</sup> The psychic origin of the hero myth according to Rank, therefore, is to be found in infantile wish-fulfilment fantasies,<sup>43</sup> which continue to survive in the mythical and artistic imagination of the adult. The "wishes" which are fulfilled in fantasy are destruction of the father, exclusive access to the mother's love, and at a later stage, when developing consciousness leads to disillusionment with the limitations of both parents, who have ceased to be the omnipotent deities of an infant paradise, the wish to supplant them with parents of a higher rank, expressed in the fantasy of royal or divine parents. Both the incest-patricide motif and the foster-parent motif are, says Rank, necessary stages in the growing ego's alienation from the parents, which constitutes "one of the most painful



achievements of evolution."<sup>44</sup> "It is absolutely necessary," he says, "for this detachment to take place, and it may be assumed that all normal grown individuals have accomplished it to a certain extent. Social progress is essentially based upon this opposition between the two generations."<sup>45</sup>

Jung, while agreeing with the basic Freudian tenet that the psyche's main task is to free itself from the nursery triangle, has, it seems to me, deepened the insights of Freud and his school in a number of important ways. In the first place, he regards the actual parents of an individual's empirical experience as symbols or physical representatives of unconscious forces. It is these "archetypes," rather than their symbols, that act upon the developing psyche:

. . . behind every individual father there stands the primordial image of the Father, and behind the fleeting personal mother the magical figure of the Magna Mater. The archetypes of the collective psyche, whose power is magnified in immortal works of art and in the fiery tenents [sic] of religion, are the dominants that rule the preconscious soul of the child and, when projected upon the human parents, lend them a fascination which often assumes monstrous proportions. From that there arises the false aetiology of neurosis which, in Freud, ossified into a system, the Oedipus complex.<sup>46</sup>

Thorburn, too, contrary to Freudian doctrine, regards the empirically experienced biological mother as of limited significance in the spiritual life of an individual compared with the significance of the archetypal mother:

While the image or archetype of the mother is universally present in human psychology, it cannot either fully be described or explained in terms of the experience--i.e., the experiencing by the individual--of the actual mother, or in terms of any individual experience whatsoever. It is essentially archaic in structure and not deducible, in its entirety, from the individual experience as given through the social or cultural conditions of the present.<sup>47</sup>





When H.G. Baynes, another of Jung's disciples, calls the mother-archetype "the original deity of man's unconsciousness,"<sup>48</sup> or Neumann calls it "the Great Mother" who "exists from ever-lasting, self-subsistent, immutable,"<sup>49</sup> it is again the archaic, transpersonal archetype these writers are describing. They are in fact attempting to define the indefinable feminine principle or "anima" which rules the collective unconscious of the male psyche and has become associated with the mother in the first place only because an individual's actual mother is "the first carrier of the anima image."<sup>50</sup>

Since the mother is a symbol, it follows that the incest motif is also "to be understood symbolically not concretistically and sexually."<sup>51</sup> It represents the tendency in the human psyche to regress to its matriarchal origins, to cling to the security of the familiar instead of actively directing creative energy into continual re-adaptation to the new in the interests of evolution. "Incest is the urge to get back to childhood,"<sup>52</sup> says Jung in Symbols of Transformation, and again, "The incest fantasy is itself an allegorical drama of regression."<sup>53</sup> In still another work he says:

Just as any strong attachment to a person or a thing may be described as a "marriage," and just as the primitive mind can express almost anything by using a sexual metaphor, so the regressive tendency of a child may be described in sexual terms as an "incestuous longing for the mother." But it is no more than a figurative way of speaking.<sup>54</sup>

One of Jung's disciples has explained the symbolism of this motif more fully:

. . . the motif of incest [is] the specifically human idiom, with which the universal tendency of atavistic regression is expressed in the human psyche. Of the two directions which the libido can take, one is backwards towards its origin, the other is forwards towards





a hypothetical evolutionary goal. Since the mother symbolizes for us the idea of source or origin, the retrogressive direction of the libido appears to go mother-wards. But the overwhelming power of the incest taboo undoubtedly obtains its authority from the larger issue at stake--namely, retrogression versus evolution.<sup>55</sup>

The incest taboo, which, like all taboos, is an expression of "the evolutionary instinct peculiar to man,"<sup>56</sup> is enforced by the hated father, a figure which is again to be understood symbolically. Neumann insists that "the killing of the father in mythology is part of the problem of the First Parents and is not to be derived from the personal parents."<sup>57</sup> The father figure symbolizes that within the psyche which prohibits passive surrender to instinctual desire in the interests of maintaining moral order. Some representatives of the Jungian school contend that the father is hated not because of his exclusive possession of the coveted mother, but because he represents authority. In support of their view they cite anthropological evidence<sup>58</sup> that in societies where it is not the father but some other member of the tribe who enforces discipline--the mother's brother, for example, who has no sexual interest in the mother--the "father-complex" does not seem to exist:

. . . the so-called father-complex might better have been termed the authority-complex or the complex against being controlled. It is a mere metaphor to speak of the boy's complex against his father, seeing that his rebellion is really directed against the authority for which his father happens in most social organizations to stand. This is exactly parallel to Jung's contention that the constellations of longings which the Freudians call the boy's incest-complex for his mother is a mere metaphor expressing his desire for those things for which the mother is a symbol--childishness, avoidance of labour and pain.<sup>59</sup>

Another important difference between the Freudian and Jungian interpretations of the parental imagos in myth is the insistence of



the Jungian school that the regressive direction of the "libido" (i.e. psychic energy) toward the mother has a teleological purpose. While an ever higher development of man's rational consciousness is desirable, it brings with it, according to Neumann, the danger that in the process the matriarchal roots (man's instinctual, emotional and aesthetic nature) will be weakened to the detriment of his spiritual health, and that, therefore, a compensatory dynamics must be activated: "the peril of present-day mankind springs in large part from the one-sidedly patriarchal development of the male intellectual consciousness, which is no longer kept in balance by the matriarchal world of the psyche."<sup>60</sup> The cure for such a state of affairs is, as it is represented mythologically, a return to the mother in order that a rebirth may take place. In a phase of mankind's spiritual history in which there is an over-emphasis on patriarchal values, the matriarchal and feminine values must be recovered. This is the task that often confronts the hero. Aldrich notes that the mythic hero "is apparently conquered by the mother; he descends into the womb of earth, the grave; but the proof that he is a hero is the fact that he is reborn. When this final and supreme test has been passed the hero is divested of all human weaknesses, and becomes a god."<sup>61</sup> Neumann, too, regards the mythological return to the mother's body as the regenerative prerequisite to rebirth, and notes how often the hero has to deliver himself from the inside of an enclosed place, usually the belly of a dragon or a whale.<sup>62</sup> The most famous example is that of the sun hero who descends into the sea to be swallowed by a monster and re-emerges glorified, having conquered the darkness.





The return to the mysterious matriarchal realm of origin in individual psychology Baynes calls the "yin phase" or "the regressive state of anima-possession," and says that it marks "a birth or a new beginning."<sup>63</sup>

Jung explains the teleological value of regression as follows:

. . . it must be pointed out that the basis of the "incestuous" desire is not cohabitation, but, as every sun myth shows, the strange idea of becoming a child again, of returning to the parental shelter, and of entering into the mother in order to be reborn through her. But the way to this goal lies through incest, i.e., the necessity of finding some way into the mother's body. One of the simplest ways would be to impregnate the mother and beget oneself in identical form all over again. But here the incest prohibition intervenes; consequently the sun myths and rebirth myths devise every conceivable kind of mother-analogy for the purpose of canalizing the libido into new forms and effectively preventing it from regressing to actual incest. For instance, the mother is transformed into an animal, or is made young again, and then disappears after giving birth, i.e., is changed back into her old shape. It is not incestuous cohabitation that is desired, but rebirth.<sup>64</sup>

The intense revulsion against whatever power lies behind the incest motif that we find expressed in the tragedy of Oedipus and in the Freudian obsession with it can be attributed to the fact that both Sophocles and Freud are the intellectual representatives of intensely one-sided patriarchal civilizations to which matriarchal values constitute a threat. According to two well-known scholars in the origins of civilizations, J.J. Bachofen and Robert Briffault,<sup>65</sup> the beginnings of society are found in the matriarchal, not the patriarchal family, and beneath the more recent patriarchal religion of Greece we find an older layer of matriarchal religion. The same applies, according to the Frankforts, to Hebrew civilization: "The depth and intimacy of man's relationship with nature found expression in the ancient symbol of the mother-goddess. But Hebrew thought ignored this image entirely. It only recognized the stern Father."<sup>66</sup>





From the insights that depth-psychology has given us into the nature and dynamics of both the individual and the collective psyche, we learn that when one side of it is over-developed at the expense of the other, a compensatory principle is activated, and "the heroic masculine will has to pay the full price to the dark, unconscious feminine principle."<sup>67</sup> From a post-Freudian perspective this is the real theme of the Oedipus tragedy. The act of incest is a symbolic surrender to the feminine principle--an interpretation that is re-inforced by Oedipus at Colonus, in which the hero retreats into the grove of the Eumenides to die.

Oedipus fulfills the destiny of all true heroes. He is separated from his origins and after meeting a series of challenges is re-united with the mother-goddess, surrender to whom brings a new and higher level of consciousness. "She" is always the object of the hero's quest, the longed - for "treasure hard to attain," or the "jewel beyond price," and when he finally wins her he is united with her in a sacred marriage or hieros gamos, representing the triumphant integration of the yin and yang principles within his own soul. "The ultimate adventure," says Campbell, "when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World."<sup>68</sup>



## CHAPTER III

### THE POET AS CULTURE-HERO

#### I

However convincing and attractive Jung's theory that archetypal symbols spring up autonomously, irrespective of time and place, it should not be allowed to blind us to the fact that the Romantic poets were the inheritors of a literary and religious tradition toward which they had a strong sense of responsibility, and in which they could, conceivably, have found the source of much of their symbolism. The seemingly original insight, or "vision," of the creative individual may be, as Kathleen Raine argues, only the rediscovery of the wisdom that traditional symbols embody. In Poetry in Relation to Traditional Wisdom she says: "There can be no originality in the sense of invention, for the archetypal world is the same at all times--as Joyce says 'the same anew.' The originality of great poetry is of another kind--it looks to origins--the twofold origins of vision and tradition,"<sup>1</sup> and again:

Poets--in particular major poets--tend to be learned in the language of symbols.

What Jung has really done is not to discover something new, but to rediscover something old. He has put into our hands a key to the great symbolic tradition of myth and poetry--to the significance of Neo-platonic myths, of the traditions of magic and alchemy, of religious symbolism both Christian and pre-Christian . . . . [T]here is not a private language for each poet, or for some period; like any other language, the traditional terms of symbols have their changes; the symbolic vocabulary of every poet is a little different, or larger or smaller, but we find the same terms in all, used with a strictness and accuracy that is the greater in the greater poets. . . . [Their symbols], far from being private and personal; are traditional; are used deliberately and knowingly. There is nothing of the unconscious in their choice and use. The poets have always known--



have been initiates of the order of the imagination that is new only to modern psychology.<sup>2</sup>

Inherent in the tradition of which the Romantics saw themselves as the heirs, however, the tradition represented by Spenser and Milton, is a paradox of which Miss Raine does not seem to be aware: it is a "visionary tradition," which is a contradiction in terms; for the term "tradition" suggests that a body of material is empirically transmitted to the poet from outside, while "visionary" suggests a radical intuitive insight, the phenomenon that literary criticism terms "inspiration." The weight of tradition, as the Romantics well knew, can endanger vision, and while they felt the responsibility of keeping alive a great and worthy tradition reaching back to the Hebrew Scriptures, and embodying what Coleridge describes as the "permanent prophecies" which "are at the same time eternal truths,"<sup>3</sup> and their symbols, which "form the living chariot that bears up the throne of the Divine Humanity,"<sup>4</sup> they were conscious that this could not be done by passive imitation. The very spirit of the tradition, rather, had to be re-activated at its psychological source--what we now call the collective unconscious. Although only Blake, perhaps, accomplished the feat, welding together "the twofold origins of vision and tradition," the very struggle of the other major Romantics to do so has psychological, literary and, as I shall try to demonstrate in subsequent chapters, religious significance.

## II

The culture-hero and the central symbol of the tradition of







which the Romantics were the inheritors, the Protestant Christian Humanist tradition, is Christ. Whether they were active renegades from orthodox Christianity, like Blake and Shelley, or whether they simply ignored it like Keats, and like Wordsworth during his most creative years, they were, nevertheless, bound by the power of the archetype incarnated in the founder of Christianity, whom Carlyle called "the greatest of all Heroes."<sup>5</sup> Jung has this to say about the Christ archetype:

The general idea of Christ the Redeemer belongs to the world-wide and pre-Christian theme of the hero and rescuer who, although he has been devoured by a monster, appears again in a miraculous way, having overcome whatever monster it was that swallowed him. When and where such a motif originated nobody knows. We do not even know how to go about investigating the problem. The one apparent certainty is that every generation seems to have known it as a tradition handed down from some preceding time. Thus we can safely assume that it "originated" at a period when man did not yet know that he possessed a hero myth; in an age, that is to say, when he did not yet consciously reflect on what he was saying. The hero figure is an archetype, which has existed since time immemorial.<sup>6</sup>

This archetype, I submit, may have been reactivated by, or at least along with, the Romantic repudiation of the orthodox theological conception of the historical Christ, for according to Jung, "the real agent" is "the self," and Christ "a symbol of the self."<sup>7</sup> In Aion Jung explains the significance of the symbol thus:

Christ is the still living myth of our culture. He is our culture hero, who, regardless of his historical existence, embodies the myth of the divine Primordial Man, the mystic Adam. It is he who occupies the centre of the Christian mandala, who is the Lord of the Tetramorph, i.e., the four symbols of the evangelists, which are like the four columns of his throne. He is in us and we in him. His kingdom is the pearl of great price, the treasure buried in the field, the grain of mustard seed which will become a great tree, and the heavenly city. As Christ is in us, so also is his heavenly kingdom. . . . Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self. . . . He is the true image of God, after whose likeness our inner man is made, invisible, incorporeal,



incorrupt, and immortal . . . .The spontaneous symbol of the self, or of wholeness, cannot in practice be distinguished from a God-image.<sup>8</sup>

In Symbols of Transformation Jung re-iterates this concept: "Christ as a hero and god-man signifies psychologically the self; that is, he represents the projection of this most important and most central of archetypes."<sup>9</sup>

Jung goes on to explain in Aion that as a symbol of the self the figure of Christ presents us with a paradox. Because it is "so sublime and spotless that everything turns dark beside it,"<sup>10</sup> it represents "perfection" but not "completeness."<sup>11</sup> Since the image of the self that is "projected" cannot be more totally integrated than the psyche --whether collective or individual--which does the projecting,<sup>12</sup> symbols of the self which emerge in "vision" invariably form a coincidentia oppositorum. That is why in the Christian myth "the hero", Christ, is counterbalanced by his opposite, Satan or Antichrist. "With unerring logic," says Jung, "early Christianity balanced Christ against an Antichrist. . . . Only with Christ did a devil enter the world as the real counterpart of God."<sup>13</sup> Jung continues to explain this phenomenon thus:

Christ is our nearest analogy of the self and its meaning. . . . Yet, although the attributes of Christ . . . undoubtedly mark him out as an embodiment of the self, looked at from the psychological angle he corresponds to only one half of the archetype. The other half appears in the Antichrist. The latter is just as much a manifestation of the self, except that he consists of its dark aspect. Both are Christian symbols, and they have the same meaning as the image of the Saviour crucified between two thieves. This great symbol tells us that the progressive development and differentiation of consciousness leads to an ever more menacing awareness of the conflict and involves nothing less than a crucifixion of the ego, its agonizing suspension between irreconcilable opposites.<sup>14</sup>





Agonizingly suspended between irreconcilable opposites is characteristically the way the Romantic poet, as a result of his heightened self-consciousness, sees himself. "Whenever the archetype of the self predominates," says Jung, "the inevitable psychological consequence is a state of conflict vividly exemplified by the Christian symbol of crucifixion--that acute state of unredeemedness which comes to an end only with the words 'consummatum est.'"<sup>15</sup> The crucified self appears in Romantic poetry as a dialectical process, one side of which is symbolized by the "hero," such as Shelley's Prometheus, and the other side by a dark Satanic figure such as his Jupiter, a dialectic which eventually culminates in the "unbinding" of the self, in freeing it from the "state of unredeemedness," or, translated into traditional Christian terms, in taking Christ down from the cross, that he may live anew.

My argument, then, is that the Romantic poets believed in Christ "poetically" if not "theologically," to use the terms as William Lynch uses them in Christ and Apollo. ("There is no need," he says, "to believe theologically in order to believe poetically.")<sup>16</sup> Shelley, at least, was an open devotee of Christ as a heroic type. In "Fragments Connected with Epipsychidion" he refers to Socrates as "the Jesus Christ of Greece," and goes on:

And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease  
To urge all living things to love each other,  
And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother  
The Devil of disunion in their souls. (33-37).

Like his own hero, Prometheus, Christ as a "type," to be distinguished from the iconic figure created by history and theology, is a liberator





from moral tyranny:

The doctrine of what some fanatics have termed a peculiar Providence that is of some power beyond and superior to that which ordinarily guides the operations of the Universe, interfering to punish the vicious and reward the virtuous--is explicitly denied by Jesus Christ. . . . 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, that ye may be the sons of your Heavenly Father, who makes the sun to shine on the good and on the evil, and the rain to fall on the just and unjust.' How monstrous a calumny have not impostors dared to advance against the mild and gentle author of this just sentiment, and against the whole tenor of his doctrines and his life, overflowing with benevolence and forbearance and compassion!. . . Jesus Christ opposed with earnest eloquence the panic fears and hateful superstitions which have enslaved mankind for ages.<sup>17</sup>

Such a portrait of Christ makes him, like Prometheus, as Shelley describes him in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound, "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends." Shelley goes on in "An Essay on Christianity" to describe how Christ abrogated the Mosaic code of law:

He descants upon its insufficiency as a code of moral conduct, which it professed to be, and absolutely selects the law of retaliation as an instance of the absurdity and immorality of its institutions. . . . He tramples upon all received opinions, on all cherished luxuries and superstitions of mankind. He bids them cast aside the claims of custom and blind faith by which they have been encompassed from the very cradle of their being, and become the imitators and ministers of the Universal God.<sup>18</sup>

Blake, too, sees Christ as a subverter of established religion and morality, symbolized in the "Wheel/Of fire surrounding all the heavens":

Jesus died because he strove  
Against the current of this Wheel; its Name  
Is Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death  
Of sin, of sorrow, & of punishment;  
Opposing Nature! It is Natural Religion  
But Jesus is the bright Preacher of Life  
Creating Nature from this fiery Law,  
By self-denial & forgiveness of Sin. (Jerusalem, Plate 77)



In The Everlasting Gospel Blake presents a portrait of Christ that is the antithesis of the traditional Christian virtues, and his conclusion even embodies the unorthodox implication that the poet himself is his own Christ:

The Vision of Christ that thou dost see  
 Is my Visions Greatest Enemy  
 Thine has a great hook nose like thine  
 Mine has a snub nose like to mine  
 Thine is the friend of All Mankind  
 Mine speaks in parables to the Blind  
 Thine loves the same world that mine hates  
 Thy Heaven doors are my Hell Gates  
 Socrates taught what Melitus  
 Loathd as a Nations bitterest Curse  
 And Caiaphas was in his own Mind  
 A benefactor to Mankind  
 Both read the Bible day & night  
 But thou readst black where I read white.

(Page 33:1-14).

Even Wordsworth, who retreated into orthodoxy in the declining years of his inspiration, says, in the guise of the Pastor in The Excursion, that those who meet in Christian temples are lingering behind the vision that Christianity offers, the vision for which "The way is marked,/The guide appointed and the ransom paid" (IX, 650-651). Keats alone among the Romantic visionaries seems indifferent to the vision that Christ offers, considering it merely one among many "personal Schemes of Redemption," of which his own "System of Soul-making--may have been the Parent" (Letters, April 21, 1819).<sup>19</sup>

### III

The Romantics are remarkably modern in their radical evaluation of the significance of Christ. Indeed they heralded a revolution that is only now beginning to make itself felt among theologians and





historians of religion. The weakening of orthodoxy brought about by the discoveries of comparative mythology and anthropology has prepared the way for such a revolution by suggesting that Christ is one among many "heroes" in whom the divinity in man has been made manifest. Psycho-mythologists such as Rank have demonstrated convincingly that the "hero," whether he appears as a product of the collective imagination in myth, or of the individual imagination in literature, invariably represents a projection of the fullest possible development of the potentialities inherent in the race and the individual respectively, and is therefore "equipped with all the excellences"<sup>20</sup> of which the imagination is capable at whatever phylogenetic or ontogenetic stage the figure appears. Twentieth-century orthodoxy, however, even while conceding to Rank such a theory of the hero, continues to insist on the uniqueness of Christ, who, it is argued,<sup>21</sup> is the perfect and final realization in history of the mythical vision. Christ is the dream of the race come true. In no other historical hero, argues orthodox Christianity, is the godhead perfectly manifest. A modification of this position emphasizes that Christ's distinction among heroes is merely one of degree; that, further, every heroic encounter with life, whether to be found in myth, history, biography, or the unrecorded life of the individual, is a manifestation of man's divinity and therefore not different in kind from Christ's. Joseph Campbell is an exponent of such a position:

[The hero] is "the king's son" who has come to know who he is and therewith has entered into the exercise of his proper power--"God's son," who has learned to know how much that title means. From this point of view the hero is symbolical of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within us all, only waiting to be





known and rendered into life. . . . [The hero] as the incarnation of God is himself the navel of the world, the umbilical point through which the energies of eternity break into time.<sup>22</sup>

Campbell objects to orthodoxy's preoccupation with Christ's historicity on the following grounds:

Whenever the poetry of myth is interpreted as biography, history, or science, it is killed. The living images become only remote facts of a distant time or sky. Furthermore, it is never difficult to demonstrate that as science and history mythology is absurd. When a civilization begins to re-interpret its mythology in this way, the life goes out of it, temples become museums, and the link between the two perspectives is dissolved. Such a blight has certainly descended on the Bible and on a great part of the Christian cult.<sup>23</sup>

The most "psychologically" (for want of a better term) satisfying concept of Christ is one which encompasses the paradox that the figure is simultaneously unique and universal, unitemporal and eternal. Such a concept is shared by a literary critic and a historian of religions. According to Maud Bodkin, who acknowledges her indebtedness to Jung, it is in the Gospel portraits of Christ that we find appearing with the fullest power the "image of Divinity in man, which we have found communicated in various degrees of clarity through the heroic figures of tragic and epic poetry":<sup>24</sup> yet the uniqueness afforded the figure by its superlative rank among heroes notwithstanding, it is a reminder of "the Divine forever entering the world."<sup>25</sup>

Eliade, as one would expect, is more orthodox in his insistence that the birth of Christ is "the historical event as such which displays the maximum of trans-historicity. . . . [This] 'historical event' constituted by the existence of Jesus is a total theophany."<sup>26</sup> He goes on to explain how this "total theophany" redeems history,



however, by implying the possibility inherent in any historical event of "transmitting a trans-historical message":

With the coming of Christianity, it is no longer the Cosmos and the Images only that are able to prefigure and reveal--there is also History, especially that of "everyday life," that which is constituted by events apparently without significance. . . . The Christian is, in the final reckoning, required to become the contemporary of the Christ; and this implies a concrete existence in history, as well as contemporaneity with the preaching, the agony and the resurrection of the Christ.<sup>27</sup>

The pattern of redemption through suffering and sacrifice to be found, as we shall see, in the Romantic hero myths, is intrinsic in the hero archetype, of which, as Jung argues, Christ is the supreme manifestation in the Western world. Eliade, Bodkin and White all make reference to the world-wide pattern of belief and practice according to which, White explains,

. . . it is expedient that one should die for the people that the whole nation perish not; that the slayer and the slain should be some embodiment of divinity, a divine king or priest, or perhaps his son or some representative or substitute or effigy, whose death and torment is somehow necessary if the life or power which he embodies, and on which the people depend, is to revive.<sup>28</sup>

As a Catholic defending the uniqueness of Christ, White goes on to argue that in Him we have the arch example of self-sacrifice, that is, the sacrifice of the self to the self, rather than the one to another; he who demands the sacrifice and he who makes the sacrifice are one. "Psychology has strangely confirmed," says White, "what theology has always maintained, that sacrifice can only be complete and perfect when it is the free and whole self-oblation of a dying man, who must also be the dying God."<sup>29</sup> Maud Bodkin, too, sees Christ as the archetype of self-sacrifice because he is the fulfilment par excellence





of the individual's divine longing to surrender individualism to the good of the group,<sup>30</sup> to die that the group might live:

The image of Christ yielding himself to death willingly, for love of mankind and to awaken in men the sense of loving unity with him and one another, gathers up and completes the meaning obscurely present in the image of the wheat, or royal victim, or animal that gave unwillingly its sacred life that the life of the community might be renewed.<sup>31</sup>

Most of the great myths of sacrifice, including the Christ myth, demonstrate, however, that the supreme sacrifice is not to lay down one's physical life for the sake of the group, but to endanger one's very soul. In his commentary on Christ's passion, Santayana asks, referring to Christ's words, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani": "If in a myth, we were describing God become man, should we include the Dark Night of the soul among his experiences?" and replies to his own question that we should, in order that the sacrifice of God to Man be complete.<sup>32</sup> The sacrifice is often portrayed--and we find it in this form in the Christ myth--by a descent into Hell:

. . . one element remains immutable . . . the theme of the descent into Hell for the sake of the salvation of a soul, whether it be the soul of someone who is ill (shamanism stricto senso), or of the spouse (Greek, North American, Polynesian or Central Asiatic myths) or of the whole of humanity (as with Christ). . . . A new element characterizes the archetype of initiation; the symbolic death is no longer undertaken solely for one's own spiritual perfection (more exactly, for the conquest of immortality), but for the salvation of others.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV

The findings of these writers and others like them reveal a progressive merging in the cosmic psyche of the identities of the Divine, the human hero-redeemer, and the suffering victim, a process





or event of which the supreme exemplar in the culture to which the Romantics belonged is the Passion of Christ. This apocalyptic process is, in their view, mirrored in the soul of the Poet, who himself then becomes a "type" of Christ. Like Christ, he "strives against the current of the Wheel," he pits himself against the one-sidedness of his age, he acts as the agent through whom, says Jung, "the collective unconscious . . . is brought to bear on the conscious outlook of an age."<sup>34</sup> In so doing he may have to "sacrifice" the personal man to the artist, the ego, or "selfhood" in Blake's term, to the transpersonal "Self," for the self-consciousness which "wounds" him can be cured only by surrender of the personal and self-assertive ego to the claims of a transcendent power.

In A Study of English Romanticism Northrop Frye, although he does not identify the Poet specifically with Christ, does note, nevertheless, that the Romantic Poet sees himself in the role of a new kind of culture-hero:

In . . . [the Romantic age] the patron is beginning to disappear and the poet is becoming immersed in society as a whole. But though he loses his traditional social functions . . . he gains a more important function, at least in his own eyes. He sees society as held together by its creative power, incarnate in himself, rather than by its leaders of action. Thus he himself steps into the role of the hero, not as personally heroic but simply as the focus of society. For him, therefore, the real event is no longer even the universal or typical historical event, but the psychological or mental event, the event in his own consciousness of which the historical event is the outward sign or allegory.<sup>35</sup>

Later in the same work he says:

. . . in Romanticism the poet himself is the hero of the quest, and his turning away from society is to be connected with what we have been discussing, the demoting of the conception of man as primarily a social being living in cities. He turns away to seek a nature who reveals herself only to the individual.



The most comprehensive and central of all Romantic themes, then, is a romance with the poet for hero. The theme of this romance form is the attaining of an expanded consciousness, the sense of identity with God and nature which is the total human heritage, so far as the limited perspective of the human situation can grasp it. To use the traditional metaphors, the great Romantic theme is the attaining of an apocalyptic vision by a fallen but potentially regenerate mind.<sup>36</sup>

With the exception of the obvious example of Wordsworth who regards the growth of his own mind as material for "heroic argument" (Prelude, III, 182), none of the English Romantic poets explicitly calls himself a hero. It remained for Carlyle,<sup>37</sup> in Heroes and Hero Worship, to define the poet's role in this light. He prepares the way for such a concept by arguing:

. . . all sorts of Heroes are intrinsically of the same material; that given a great soul, open to the Divine Significance of Life, then there is given a man fit to speak of this, to sing of this, to fight and work for this, in a great, victorious, enduring manner; here is given a Hero--the outward shape of whom will depend on the time and the environment he finds himself in.<sup>38</sup>

He defines the Hero, or "Great Man," as he "with the deep-seeing eye," who penetrates the sacred mystery of the universe, who exposes "the open secret";<sup>39</sup> and again, as a "Force of Nature: whatsoever is truly great in him springs up from the inarticulate deeps."<sup>40</sup> The "true heroic quality" in a man of letters he defines as "that which compels the writer to utter-forth his inspired soul."<sup>41</sup> Of the Poet specifically he says: "The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce;--and will produce, always when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet."<sup>42</sup>





Modern psychology gives new support to such a view of the poet. Campbell, who acknowledges his indebtedness to both the Freudian and Jungian schools, says of the artist:

The individual who dredges up what has been forgotten by his whole generation or his entire civilization is the culture hero of his day. The hero's task is to break through to the causal zones of the psyche, i.e., to the "archetypal" level and bring the life-giving energies back to his people. The hero dies as modern man to be reborn as eternal man. He breaks through the level of personal dream to the level of depersonalized dream which is myth.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of the psychological "family romance" the creative man, like the hero of myth, "stands in conflict with the world of the fathers,"<sup>44</sup> whom he must slay in order to reach the realm of "The Mothers" to be reborn. "All over the earth," says Jung, "in the most various forms, each with a different time-colouring, the saviour-hero appears as a fruit of the entry of libido into the maternal depths of the unconscious."<sup>45</sup> Christ, who came into conflict with the patriarchal Jewish law and surrendered willingly to the cross, which for Jung is a "symbolical equivalent"<sup>46</sup> for the Mother, is no exception. Christ and Oedipus, according to such a view, are versions of the same archetype. Like all heroes, they surrender to a power which threatens the established order, but the fruit of their sacrifice is a higher level of moral consciousness. The hero of a Greek drama was as much a religious symbol as the cult-hero worshipped in Christian liturgy,<sup>47</sup> but for us today "the character of revelation is no longer separable from the individual."<sup>48</sup> That is, the symbol-creating process is no longer to be found in a cultural canon but in the creative individual,<sup>49</sup> whose imaginary heroes are projections of the godhead he finds within himself.





## CHAPTER IV

### THE POET AS ANTI-HERO

#### I

Because of the faith of its prime movers in the positive values of love and imagination, Romanticism is the expression of a predominantly optimistic weltanschauung; yet a "shadow" side of the movement is evident in its dark heroes, particularly those engendered in the imagination of Byron, who in his own person, as well as in his literary creations, captured the imagination of the nineteenth century, making "Byronic hero" synonymous with "Romantic hero." Although the greater part of the Byronic canon remains outside the scope of my topic, the "Byronic hero," following in the footsteps of the Romantic Poet "like the shadow following the body," must have his due.

All of the Romantic heroes share at least something of his tortured and defiant nature. His closest kin are Shelley's Alastor and the unregenerate hero of the opening scene of Prometheus Unbound, but even the perverse self-reliance of Wordsworth's "Solitary," and the refusal of Keats' Hyperion to acquiesce in Jove's victory over Saturn have Byronic overtones. The Byronic spectre haunts Coleridge, too, withering his imagination and luring him into "abstruse research," although he does not share the Romantic idealization of Satanic will. At about the same time that Byron was writing Manfred, Coleridge wrote:



. . . in its utmost abstraction and consequent state of reprobation, the will becomes Satanic pride and rebellious self-idolatry in the relations of the spirit to itself, and remorseless despotism relatively to others; the more hopeless as the more obdurate by its subjugation of sensual impulses, by its superiority to toil and pain and pleasure; in short, by the fearful resolve to find in itself alone the one absolute motive of action, under which all other motives from within and from without must be either subordinated or crushed.

This is the character which Milton has so philosophically as well as sublimely embodied in the Satan of his *Paradise Lost*. Alas! too often has it been embodied in real life.<sup>1</sup>

Although an accurate description of the Byronic archetype, this passage fails to acknowledge the tragic potential inherent in the figure, a potential that reaches its fullest Romantic realization in Byron's tragic heroes.

## II

In the preceding chapter I drew attention to Jung's discussion in Aion of the psycho-evolutionary meaning of the Christ-Antichrist dichotomy and the relevance of such a concept for a consideration of the psycho-evolutionary role of the poet-hero. "Culture-hero" is the term I applied to the Poet in his Christ-like aspect; "anti-hero," coined from "Antichrist,"<sup>2</sup> is the term I use for the figure in his satanic or Byronic aspect. While the saviour-hero surrenders in love to a transcendent and ultimately benevolent power, the anti-hero is in ceaseless revolt against anything that limits the fulfilment of his aspiration to absolute self-sufficiency, whether the inhibiting power be the social order or the total cosmic scheme and its Creator. Obsessed with a lust for limitless freedom, limitless power and limitless knowledge, he finds only in death a haven from his self-created agony. The lofty reach of his aspirations, and the strength of his determination



to fulfill them in the face of inevitable failure are "heroic" qualities. To call him the "anti-hero," therefore, is not to say that he is "unheroic," but to acknowledge that the object of his defiance encompasses the social order which gives the term "heroism" its meaning.

In his rebellion is something to which the consciousness of modern man, who "is by no means the average man," responds. Modern man, according to Jung, is "the man who stands upon the peak, or at the very edge of the world, the abyss of the future before him, above him the heavens, and below him the whole of mankind with a history that disappears in primeval mists." He only is modern who is "solitary . . . of necessity and at all times," who in a struggle toward fuller consciousness "has estranged himself from the mass of men who live entirely within the bounds of tradition." He is thus guilty of the "Promethean sin." Carrying his higher level of consciousness "like a burden of guilt," he must "atone" for it with his "creative ability."<sup>3</sup> Because the "Byronic hero" is the type of "modern man," the impact that the figure made on the imagination of western Europe might be explained in terms of psycho-evolution. The failure of the French Revolution appeared to be the failure of collective effort to throw off oppression and achieve an ideal social order. Although Europe had consequently swung back to a reactionary mood, the impulse to freedom which had been activated and was still smouldering found a new form in the concept of an uncompromising individualism which negated the social ideal.







Byron was perfectly equipped both physically and psychologically to embody this ideal. His obsession with the type of the arch rebel to the point of consciously trying to realize in his own life the "heroes" of his imagination has been made a legend by such portraits as the following:

. . . in his conversation and poetry [he] took up the part of a fallen or exiled being, expelled from heaven, or sentenced to a new avatar on earth for some crime, existing under a curse, predoomed to a fate really fixed by himself in his own mind, but which he seemed determined to fulfil. At times this dramatic imagination resembled a delusion; he would play at being mad, and gradually get more and more serious, as if he believed himself to be destined to wreck his own life and that of everyone near him.<sup>4</sup>

Praz suggests that by temperament, by a "psychological tendency handed down to him from a long chain of ancestors,"<sup>5</sup> Byron was admirably suited to play the role of "Fatal Man." "Given the vanity of his own nature, what," Praz asks, "is more probable than that he should have deliberately modelled himself upon the figure of the accursed angel? Who can be sure that he may not have studied every detail in front of a mirror, even to the terrible oblique look with which he frightened people, particularly his mistresses?"<sup>6</sup>

The most fascinatingly morbid parallel of all between Byron's life and the career of the "accursed angel" is to be found in the incest-motif so dear to the Romantic imagination. Milton's Satan committed incest with his daughter, Sin (Paradise Lost II, 765), and Byron, so the legend goes, with his sister Augusta. Wilson Knight observes in "The Two Eternities" that "every act of artistic creation involves a kind of incestuous union within the personality," but that Byron "is suspected of it in actual fact."<sup>7</sup> According to Chew, the



motif is "one of the pathological extremes of the reaction from classical and rationalistic restraint."<sup>8</sup>

The obvious relationship between this motif and the theme of guilt running through Byron's tragedies tempts one to describe, if not "explain", the Byronic hero as a psychological phenomenon in terms of the Freudian "family romance," especially if one agrees with Praz's view that "In no other literary period . . . has sex been so obviously the mainspring of works of imagination."<sup>9</sup> The antagonism toward, and defiance of, external patriarchal sanctions suggests an unresolved Oedipus complex; that is, the Byronic hero represents a stage in psychic development when the ego is still bound to the parental imagos. The libido regresses to the image of the mother (for whom the sister is a surrogate<sup>10</sup>), but the "incest taboo," which forbids possession of the desired object, prohibits the fulfilment of desire at the same time that it makes the desire itself a cause of guilt. "The ruling principle of Hate" in "Prometheus," which "for its pleasure doth create/The things it may annihilate" (21-22), and Cain's malevolent God, who denies man access to the Tree of Life, are versions of the "father imago" who prohibits the unlimited fulfilment of desire and to whom, therefore, the adolescent ego attributes the hatred that it is itself projecting. The Byronic hero, fails, in these terms, to achieve self-fulfilment, because his hatred of the father imago prohibits him from overcoming its tyranny by assimilating it and thus achieving the autonomy necessary to take full possession, without guilt, of the feminine "Self" or "anima."



If, however, one prefers not to invoke Freud, one can account for the figure in terms of Kathleen Raine's theory of "the twofold origins of vision and tradition."<sup>11</sup> As at least two scholars have been at pains to demonstrate, all of the characteristics of the Byronic hero can be traced to literary sources. While there is a school of criticism which regards the study of "sources" as "heaping academic dust upon the corpse of literature,"<sup>12</sup> even the archetypal critic must acknowledge with Ellsworth Barnard that there is "one sort of study of sources which is of the highest value: that which is a means to the discovery of some vital principle of continuity, some persistent thought or feeling which forms a part of the mental and spiritual life of an individual or a nation or a race, and which endures and changes as does that life itself."<sup>13</sup>

The Byronic hero represents the Romantic manifestation of such "a persistent thought or feeling." Its earlier manifestations have been traced by Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony, and P.L. Thorslev in The Byronic Hero, both of whom see the Byronic hero as the culmination of a long literary tradition. Praz suggests that the figure is one of the "metamorphoses" of Satan, who appears before Byron in Tasso, Marino and Milton, and who in Byron assimilates the figures of "the generous outlaw or sublime criminal"<sup>14</sup> and the Gothic villain. Thorslev, too, is primarily concerned with the chain of mythological and literary influences that culminate in the Byronic hero, but claims a greater degree of individual genius for Byron, suggesting that his hero is the Romantic reconstitution of a rebel type who throughout man's spiritual history has challenged tradition and authority, "not only on a political





level, but also on the religious and philosophic level--and sometimes, in nihilistic extremes, against life itself."<sup>15</sup> Faustus in Marlowe's drama, for example, is such a hero, "struggling out from under the repression of medieval orthodoxy."<sup>16</sup> The two other principal Romantic manifestations of the type are Cain of the Biblical legend, who, for transgressing divine authority, is condemned to be an eternal wanderer and outcast accursed of God;<sup>17</sup> and, again, Milton's Satan, the great prototype of the sublime rebel, the supreme champion of freedom, and the enemy of tyranny in all its forms, who is condemned to eternal damnation for his presumption.<sup>18</sup> But "the Byronic Hero at his noblest"<sup>19</sup> is Prometheus, the illicit possessor of divine fire, who incurs the wrath of Jupiter in the interests of humanity. According to Thorslev, Byron reconstituted these traditional figures by uniting the will to self-assertion, or to individuality, with a "religious" longing for the immersion of personal identity in a greater power. The dilemma created by these conflicting impulses Thorslev calls Byron's Weltschmerz,<sup>20</sup> and demonstrates that the poet's Harold, Manfred and Cain are all manifestations of it.

Praz and Thorslev, while concerned chiefly with the mythical and literary lineage of the Byronic hero, lend support to the view that the figure is an archetypal symbol in the Jungian sense by demonstrating that it represents a persistent impulse in human nature, the impulse to assert the finite ego against the forces both internal and external that oppose its progress toward the Infinite, or what Jung calls the "Self," which is the goal of its quest. Nietzsche calls the impulse "Dionysian," and Rollo May regards it as one aspect



of the positive principle that he calls "the Daimonic." Without the daimonic impulse, according to May, no progress in human consciousness is possible. Daimonic figures such as Satan and Lucifer "had to be invented, had to be created, in order to make human action and freedom possible." They are the symbols that express the paradox that every "yea" involves a "nay"; that for every gain in human power and knowledge there is a loss of the positive value that is mythologically represented by Paradise:

For every thought destroys as it creates: to think this thing, I have to cut out something else; to say "yes" to this is to say "no" to that. . . . To perceive this thing I have to shut out other things. For consciousness works by way of either/or: it is destructive as well as constructive. Without rebellion no consciousness.<sup>21</sup>

May goes on to explain in similar terms the Romantic and post-Romantic attraction to Milton's Satan:

Lucifer, an angel thrown out of heaven, becomes the dynamic hero of Milton's Paradise Lost. When an angel assumes independent self-assertion--call it pride or refusal to knuckle under or what not--he then takes on power and the capacity to grasp our attention and even admiration. He asserts his own being, his own choice, his individual lust. If we think of symbolic representations like Lucifer as exemplifying some significant urge in the human psyche--an urge toward growth, a new form born in the individual which he then sees in the world about him--then this assertion of independent choice is surely a positive aspect of growth.<sup>22</sup>

### III

Satan is one of two mythic figures which captivated the imagination of Byron. The heroes of his early tales, as well as of Childe Harold and the dramas, recall the fallen archangel of Milton's epic. The Giaour has his unquelled spirit and similar traces of a former glory:





Dark and unearthly is the scowl  
 That glares beneath his dusky cowl.  
 The flash of that dilating eye  
 Reveals too much of times gone by;  
 Though varying, indistinct its hue,  
 Oft will his glance the gazer rue,  
 For in it lurks that nameless spell,  
 Which speaks, itself unspeakable,  
 A spirit yet unquell'd and high  
 That claims and keeps ascendancy;  
 . . . . .  
 Time hath not yet the features fix'd,  
 But brighter traits with evil mix'd;  
 And there are hues not always faded,  
 Which speak a mind not all degraded  
 . . . . .  
 The close observer can espy  
 A noble soul, and lineage high. (832-869).

The hero of Lara shares Satan's half-exulting and half-regretting  
 state of mind:

There was in him a vital scorn of all:  
 As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,  
 He stood a stranger in this breathing world,  
 An erring spirit from another hurl'd;  
 A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped  
 By choice the perils he by chance escaped  
 But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet  
 His mind would half exult and half regret.  
 (Canto I, 313-320).

The same scornful pride, the same rebellious spirit appears again in  
Childe Harold:

But soon he knew himself the most unfit  
 Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held  
 Little in common; untaught to submit  
 His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled  
 In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,  
 He would not yield dominion of his mind  
 To spirits against whom his own rebelled;  
 Proud though in desolation; which could find  
 A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.  
 (Canto III, xii).

This turning of the mind upon itself, "Proud though in desolation," to  
 create its own independent world, the steadfast refusal to "yield



dominion of his mind" to anything external to it, are direct reminders of that earlier anti-hero who said, "The mind is its own place, and in itself/Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

The figure of Childe Harold, as a manifestation of Byron's own character, is a popularization and humanization of the Satanic type. The "strange pangs" which "flash along his brow" suggest a secret source of suffering (I, viii), or "some sin" by which he was "to sorrow . . . cast" (III, lxxiii). Defiant, proud and solitary he finds only in the "mountains, waves and skies" a value worthy of the total commitment for which he longs (III, lxxv), and a reality which "purifies from self" (III, xc), but his compulsion to self-assertion makes surrender to the mystic unknown manifest in Nature impossible for him. He therefore puts his faith in the humanistic values of creativity and "the waking Reason" (IV, vii), for

'Tis a base  
Abandonment of reason to resign  
Our right of thought--our last and only place  
Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine.  
(IV, cxxvii).

The other principal mythic figure which Byron's imagination assimilated and revitalized is the Prometheus of Aeschylus' tragedy. He said of it that "The Prometheus . . . has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written. . . ."23 His lyric, "Prometheus," written during the same period in which he was at work on the third canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, reveals the essential difference between the Satanic and the Promethean archetypes. While Satan defies the Omnipotent to feed his own egotistical lust for power, Prometheus does



so out of compassion for "The sufferings of mortality" (2):

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind  
To render with thy precepts less  
The sum of human wretchedness,  
And strengthen man with his own mind. (35-38).

The qualities that he has won for mankind, and that define the best in humanity, compassion and intelligence, are illicit possessions from the perspective of "The ruling principle of Hate (20)," for these qualities constitute a human transformation of the divine energy, the "fire" which Prometheus stole from the gods and showed humanity how to use for its betterment. According to Byron's version of the myth, Prometheus is himself "a symbol and a sign" of a humanity in possession of the divine fire:

Thou art a symbol and a sign  
To mortals of their fate and force;  
Like thee, man is in part divine,  
A troubled stream from a pure source;  
And man in portions can foresee  
His own funereal destiny;  
His wretchedness, and his resistance,  
And his sad unallied existence. (45-52).

Man's ability to understand his condition is simultaneously the boon which Prometheus brings to him and his punishment for the illicit possession.

#### IV

The type of the Byronic Satan-Prometheus achieves its full manifestation in Byron's tragedies. Although they share with classical Greek tragedy the theme of the individual's violation of eternal law, Byron's intention was "to make a regular English drama."





This drama was not necessarily intended for the stage. His object was "a mental theatre,"<sup>24</sup> one concerned with psychological rather than physical conflict. Even in Sardanapalus and Cain in which the conflict erupts in external action, "the crisis is in the soul of the protagonist."<sup>25</sup> In this characteristic, Byron's dramas are intrinsically modern. The dualism, or what in modern jargon we call the schizoid state, of Byron's own character,<sup>26</sup> the sense of "high thought . . . /Linked to a servile mass of matter" (Cain, II, i, 50-51), and of alienated and subjective consciousness pitting itself against an indifferent universe produces the spiritual conflict which marks the intellectual life of modern man. When Lucifer says, in Cain, "all things are/Divided with me" (I, i, 547-548), he is giving transpersonal expression to the tragic self-knowledge that Byron reveals on the personal level in his letters and journals: ". . . my good and evil are at perpetual war,"<sup>27</sup> he says, and "Man is born passionate of body but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of God in his Mainspring of Mind."<sup>28</sup> This conflict between the potential for good and the recalcitrant will lies at the heart of the tragic idea. The Byronic hero is "heroic" in his aspirations and "tragic" in his knowledge of his own "failure" and his "guilt." "I must remark from Aristotle and Rymer," Byron said, "that the hero of tragedy and (I add meo periculo) a tragic poem must be guilty, to excite 'terror and pity', the end of tragic poetry."<sup>29</sup> Since his knowledge of his guilt, that is, his self-knowledge, is itself a triumph, he wrenches from his suffering a mighty gain for himself and for the mankind he represents.



## V

The demonic element in knowledge, particularly self-knowledge, is the theme of Manfred, the purest example among Byron's dramas of "mental theatre." Although Byron denied the influence of either Marlowe's or Goethe's version of the Faust legend, avowing that ". . . it was the Staubach and the Jungfrau, and something else, much more than Faustus, that made me write Manfred,"<sup>30</sup> the protagonist of the tragedy belongs to a succession of archetypal figures who express simultaneously the aspiration of the intellect to possess absolute knowledge and the danger inherent in such aspiration. According to Rollo May, those myths down through the ages which have portrayed the birth of human consciousness have tried to convey the "connection between knowledge and the daimonic," to warn that to lust for knowledge is to "become of the devil's world."<sup>31</sup> Such is the Abbot's fear for Manfred:

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things  
Which are forbidden to the search of man;  
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,  
The many evil and unheavenly spirits  
Which walk the valley of the shade of death,  
Thou communest. (III, i, 34-39).

The Abbot accurately perceives the cause of Manfred's agony, for the hero has aspired "beyond the dwellers of the earth" (II, iv, 60), and confronted the prince of evil himself. In so doing he has discovered the demonic truth,

That knowledge is not happiness, and science  
But an exchange of ignorance for that  
Which is another kind of ignorance. (II, iv, 59-64).

This discovery, however, no more than confirms a conviction





which Manfred expresses in the opening lines of the play, and which constitutes its theme:

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most.  
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,  
The tree of knowledge is not that of life.  
(I, i, 10-12).

The knowledge that is "sorrow" is self-knowledge. The opening scene, in which, as Manfred is seated alone in his study, his "eyes but close/To look within" (I, i, 6-7), suggests that all of the supernatural figures he conjures are elements of his own being, and that the action takes place within his soul. The voice of the "incantation" is therefore the voice of his own conscience impressing upon him his guilt:

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,  
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,  
By that most seeming virtuous eye,  
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;  
By the perfection of thine art  
Which passed for human thine own heart;  
By thy delight in others' pain  
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,  
I call upon thee: and compel  
Thyself to be thy proper hell! (I, i, 243-252).

The encounter with the Witch of the Alps is likewise an encounter with an internal source of knowledge. Her mysterious, supernatural character, the implication that she is a version of Mother Earth (II, ii, 33-39), her possession of a "great knowledge" from which the hero shrinks back "in recreant mortality" (II, ii, 127) point to her identity as Manfred's own "anima," or "Magna Mater." She knows him, furthermore, with an intimacy possible only to one who has dwelt with him through the "ages--ages--/Space and eternity" (II, i, 46-47) which, earlier in the play, he has said circumscribe his existence. Her persistent questioning forces him to recount his



fatal deed and hence to face himself in her knowledge of him:

I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;  
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,  
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,  
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings. (II, ii, 34-37).

His encounter with the Chamois Hunter likewise impresses upon him his guilt by prompting him to "look within" (II, i, 72). The "humble virtues" of the "peasant of the Alps" (II, i, 63-64) are a painful reminder of his own "scorched" soul (II, i, 63-73). The sympathy of the simple peasant, and his recognition of Manfred's "cautious feeling for another's pain" (II, i, 80) only aggravate Manfred's sense of his moral perdition. Not only has he destroyed himself, but he has destroyed those whom he "best loved," for his "embrace was fatal" (II, i, 86-88).

Related to the theme of guilt-producing self-knowledge is the incest motif. Manfred has loved--and destroyed--one who was akin to him, "akin" in the sense of "being like":

She was like me in lineaments; her eyes,  
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone  
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;  
But softened all, and tempered into beauty:  
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,  
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind  
To comprehend the universe: nor these  
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,  
Pity, and smiles, and tears--which I had not;  
And tenderness--But that I had for her;  
Humility--and that I never had.  
Her faults were mine--her virtues were her own--  
I loved her, and destroyed her! (II, ii, 106-118).

Manfred and his feminine counterpart "loved each other as we should not love" (II, i, 27). The love was sinful because it was narcissistic. Incest is a form of narcissism: to "know" another who is a mirror



image of oneself is to "know" oneself, and therefore to commit the demonic, illicit act.

Self-knowledge, however, while it produces the agony of guilt, culminates in self-sufficiency, which is the "sought 'Kalon'" referred to in the opening scene of the final act:

There is a calm upon me--  
 Inexplicable stillness: which till now,  
 Did not belong to what I knew of life.  
 If that I did not know philosophy  
 To be of all our vanities the motliest,  
 The merest word that ever fooled the ear  
 From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem  
 The golden secret, the sought "Kalon," found,  
 And seated in my soul. (III, i, 5-14).

Having confronted himself and his guilt in various forms in the first two acts, he now experiences the ultimate autonomy, freedom from the oppressive powers both of evil, personified as Arimanes,<sup>32</sup> and of "good," personified as the Abbot. First he refuses to strike a bargain with the devil:

my past power,  
 Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,  
 But by superior science--penance, daring,  
 And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill  
 In knowledge of our fathers--when the earth  
 Saw men and spirits walking side by side,  
 And gave ye no supremacy: I stand  
 Upon my strength--I do defy--deny--  
 Spurn back, and scorn ye! (II, iv, 113-121).<sup>33</sup>

Then he defies the need for external mediation between himself and the "overruling Infinite" (II, iv, 48):

whate'er  
 I may have been, or am, doth rest between  
 Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal  
 To be my mediator. (II, i, 52-53).





In words which echo those of Milton's arch-individualist he proclaims his autonomy:

The mind which is immortal makes itself  
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,--  
Is its own origin of ill and end  
And its own place and time. (III, iv, 129-132).

The absolutes to which he aspired have eluded him but he has wrenched from the jealous cosmos the lofty independence which enables him to say: "Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die" (III, iv, 151).

## VI

Cain is a marked advance over Manfred in metaphysical complexity. In the later play Byron splits the hero archetype into the Promethean, or humanitarian figure of Cain, and the Satanic, "shadow" figure of Lucifer. The theme is again the relationship between knowledge and the demonic, with the difference that the tragedy of the hero's plight is here heightened by the absence of any compensation for the agony of his advance in consciousness. While Manfred's achievement of self-sufficiency is his triumph, the inescapable human bonds which Cain's increased "knowledge" drives him to violate are in the end a greater source of pain than the felt injustice of the self-proclaimed principle of good.

The fatal "flaw" in Cain's character is his presumption in doubting the morality of a ruling power which endows its subjects with the gift of intellectual curiosity, and then simultaneously tempts them and forbids them to use it. The irony here, in terms of the Aristotelian convention, is that if Cain's doubt is justifiable, as



Byron would have us believe, then it is not a "flaw." The traditional Calvinist evasion of the paradox, that whatever God wills is good because He is good, is attacked twice in the opening scene. When Adam accuses his son of blasphemy for suggesting that he ought to have disobeyed God a second time and eaten of the Tree of Life, Cain replies:

The snake spoke truth; it was the Tree of Knowledge;  
It was the Tree of Life: knowledge is good,  
And Life is good; and how can both be evil?  
(I, i, 47-48).

Again just before the entrance of Lucifer, Cain's words challenge the orthodox reaction to intellectual skepticism:

They have but  
One answer to all questions, "'Twas his will,  
And he is good." How know I that? Because  
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?  
(I, i, 75-77).

Lucifer's entry on the scene at the very moment that Cain is voicing in soliloquy these antinomian doubts suggests that the "master of spirits" (I, i, 97) is no autonomous power but the personification of Cain's own compulsion to intellectual skepticism. As Lucifer insists (and as Byron himself does in the Preface<sup>34</sup>), the serpent who tempted Eve was no demon but only a serpent, "the snake--/No more: (I, i, 223-224). He merely roused the demonic "In those he spake to with his forked tongue" (I, i, 229-230). In the same way Lucifer's words tempt Cain: "Because thou hast thought of this ere now" (II, ii, 357). Lucifer is the personification of Cain's internal source of "gnosis." This is why the "Demon" insists that he tempts none, "Save with the truth" (I, i, 196-197). His arguments





repeatedly imply the Gnostic inversion of the traditional concepts of Good and Evil:

Then who was the Demon? He  
 Who would not let ye live, or he who would  
 Have made ye live for ever, in the joy  
 And power of Knowledge? (I, i, 206-210).

While Lucifer's "truth" convinces Cain of his own potential immortality through gnosis, it at the same time reinforces his sense of the injustice of the ruling principle, for the reward with which his parents were tempted was a delusion: "It was a lying tree--for we know nothing" (II, ii, 161). Whatever gain in knowledge, furthermore, that Cain makes through his association with Lucifer serves only to increase his misery by making him more intensely aware of his debased state:

LUCIFER: Didst thou not require  
 Knowledge? And have I not, in what I showed,  
 Taught thee to know thyself?

CAIN: Alas! I seem  
 Nothing.

LUCIFER: And this should be the human sum  
 Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's  
 nothingness. (II, ii, 416-422).

As Byron himself explained, this sense of the dichotomy between Cain's sense of his own value and the values to which he aspired in seeking knowledge is the cause of the catastrophe:

Cain is a proud man: if Lucifer promised him kingdoms, etc., it would elate him: the object of the Demon is to depress him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere internal irritation, not premeditation, or envy of Abel (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the author of Life, than the mere living.<sup>35</sup>



To avoid making Cain "contemptible" in order to make him a fitting tragic hero, and at the same time to avoid "any perversions of Holy Writ"<sup>36</sup> was no easy feat. The dramatist has achieved it by bestowing on his protagonist a "Promethean" humanitarianism. Cain's rebellion is inspired not only by egotistical passions but also by "something of a high disinterestedness,"<sup>37</sup> by concern for "all the unnumbered and innumerable/Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be" (I, i, 447-448). His tragedy is that while he "thirsts for good" (II, ii, 238) he commits evil. His compassion for his race (II, i, 65-71) and his tenderness for his loved ones (III, i, 10-34), in deeply felt contrast with the ruthlessness of God's over-ruling will, maddens him into perpetuating the very principle of evil against which his defiance is directed.

But there is a kind of victory in his tragic fate. The outcome of the catastrophe is that he knows. He knows the horror of what he has done; he knows the value of the bond he has violated; and he knows the extent and the limits of his responsibility: "That which I am, I am; I did not seek/For Life, nor did I make myself" (III,i, 509-510). His pride and defiance have been transformed by suffering into a humane awareness of his own nature and a reluctant acknowledgement of God's power to punish.

The "Byronic hero" became the most popular and widely diffused personification of the Romantic and post-Romantic antinomian impulse. The response excited by the figure in both America and Western Europe suggests that it represents an "Eternal Form" in human nature, which at crucial turning points in history is called upon by



Providence to uncoil itself. Every Romantic poet-hero confronts his anti-type at some stage in his spiritual career. His struggle to free himself from its tyranny by assimilating it into his mythic inner world is one of the central themes of Romantic poetry.





## CHAPTER V

### AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS MYTH

#### I

Of the three major Romantic poets under discussion, Wordsworth is undoubtedly the most difficult to defend as a poet of mythopoeic imagination. Only his most perceptive and most avant-garde critics have recognized him as such. His heavy dependence on personal empirical experience as the source of inspiration, his "matter-of-factness"<sup>1</sup> or preoccupation with apparently pedestrian details, his lapses into a prosaic, documentary style which seem to betray an "unpoetic" literal-mindedness--all this makes it far from easy to recognize the visionary or "mythopoeic" quality which is the essence of his major poetry. Those critics such as Bloom and Hartman who do recognize this quality in him<sup>2</sup> cannot resist the temptation to compare him with the recognized visionaries, Milton, Blake or Shelley, a comparison which can only do Wordsworth an injustice, since his vision is of a less traditional and therefore less obvious kind. The assumption seems to be that Wordsworth is an abortive visionary because he does not write the kind of poetry that Milton or Blake or Shelley does. "An unresolved opposition between Imagination and Nature," says Hartman, "prevents him from becoming a visionary poet,"<sup>3</sup> and Bloom speaks of his "resistance to his own imaginative emancipation."<sup>4</sup> Since the declared aim of the work that was to have been Wordsworth's magnum opus, The Recluse, is to celebrate the union of "the discerning intellect of Man" with "this goodly universe" ("Prospectus," 52-53),<sup>5</sup> or "the individual Mind" and "the external World" (63-65), and to sing "the



spousal verse/Of this great consummation" (57-58), it hardly makes critical sense to evaluate him in terms of his failure to free his imagination from that dynamic union with empirical phenomena which, for him, constitutes the apocalyptic experience. It is precisely the mark of his genius as a mythopoeic poet that the mind of man and empirical reality are "opposed" in his vision only in the sense that they are engaged in a creative dialectic which, culminating in "the great consummation," the apocalyptic identity of Man and Nature, transforms the "common day" (55) into the mythic "Paradise" (47).

Wordsworth's statements about the Imagination suggest that he regards it as the transforming power in this dialectic and therefore the means by which the soul attains to "the great Apocalypse" (The Prelude, 1805, VI, 570).<sup>6</sup> The Imagination for him, as for his fellow visionary Shelley,<sup>7</sup> "is the faculty by which the poet conceives and produces--that is, images--individual forms in which are embodied universal ideas or abstractions."<sup>8</sup> It has "no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects," he says in the 1815 Preface to Poems, "but . . . the operation of the mind upon those objects," transforming them ("conferring, abstracting, modifying"<sup>9</sup>) in such a way that it reveals through them "the types and symbols of Eternity" (The Prelude, VI, 571). Imagination is the power which "draws all things to one"<sup>10</sup> or by which "elements of the most different nature and distant origin are blended together into one harmonious and homogeneous whole."<sup>11</sup> But the Imagination also "creates," he says in the 1815 Preface, and does so by "innumerable processes" the most important of which consists in "alternations" between the one and the many, the many and the one--"alternations proceeding from, and





governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers."<sup>12</sup> He then goes on to distinguish between two kinds of Imagination, the "poetical," or "enthusiastic and meditative," represented by the Holy Scriptures and the poetry of Milton (that is, what I have called "the visionary tradition," p. 44 above), and the "human and dramatic," represented by Shakespeare's works.<sup>13</sup> Although he attributes the quality of Imagination to his own works without specifying to which of the two kinds he is referring, The Prelude, as I hope to demonstrate, shares in the "poetical" or visionary tradition.

Wordsworth's republican sympathy, his desire to effect "an egalitarian revolution of the spirit,"<sup>14</sup> precluded for him a concept of "poetical" truth as the exclusive right of a literary elect. As "a man speaking to men,"<sup>15</sup> the poet, who is endowed above other men with the power to see and abstract the eternal archetypes from empirical experience, must translate his vision back into a language that makes it accessible to men not so endowed. The task of Wordsworth's Muse, as of Keats' *Moneta*, is to "humanize" her sayings to the ears of mortals, "making comparison of earthly things" that they may "understand aright" (The Fall of Hyperion, II, 1-3). Wordsworth uses the objects of nature to weave a veil or, in the image of his fellow poet, Shelley, to spread "a figured curtain" over the world.<sup>16</sup> Paradoxically, he reveals and veils his vision simultaneously out of the fear that the blinding light of naked apocalypse might annihilate mortal vision if not filtered through the veil of empirical images. His statement that the appropriate business of poetry is "to treat not of things as they are but as they appear . . . to the senses and to the passions"<sup>17</sup> suggests the "humanizing" of apocalypse, that is, the translation of the intuitively



grasped truth ("things as they are") that lies behind appearances into the language of empirical experience (things "as they appear"). In the famous Snowdon passage, the climax of Wordsworth's account of the progress of the poetic Imagination from its "very place of birth/In its blind cavern" (XIII, 173-174) to "light and open day" (175-176), it is significantly not the sun but the fading moon of dawn which provides the light, filtering out much of what the blaze of noon would reveal.

The symbolism by means of which Wordsworth executes his vision is less traditional than that of either Blake or Shelley, precisely because he does not try to abandon the quantitative dimensions of "the very world, which is the world/Of all of us" (1850, XI, 142-143), does not try to "out-soar the humanities,"<sup>18</sup> to use his own criticism of Shelley. Time, that can be measured and divided into the stages of an individual life, and space, apportioned according to the dimensions of the objects that fill it, are for Wordsworth manifestations, or what Mircea Eliade calls "hierophanies," of a reality that has no quantitative dimensions. The perspective provided by Eliade makes Wordsworth the most radical of the Romantic Christian Humanists.<sup>19</sup> The life of Christ, according to Eliade, constituting a "historical" event, that is, an event taking place within empirically measurable time and space, displays at the same time "trans-historicity."<sup>20</sup> For the Christian, therefore, any historical event becomes capable of transmitting a trans-historical meaning. With the coming of Christianity, says Eliade, "everyday life . . . constituted by events apparently without significance" is able to "prefigure and reveal."<sup>21</sup>

No critic has as yet, to my knowledge, attempted an interpretation of Wordsworth's poetry from such a radical perspective. The only one who





even implies the possibility of such an interpretation, who acknowledges the poet's use of empirical experience as a space-time hierophany, is Elizabeth Sewell. In The Human Metaphor, in which she presents her thesis that metaphor is the "method" by which man investigates and names the unknown, she argues, with reference to Wordsworth, that just as the empirically experienced universe is the spatial metaphor for the mind, so the history of an individual life is its temporal metaphor, mind being the unknown term in both metaphoric equations.<sup>22</sup> The space-mind metaphor is the more easily recognizable of the two and has been neglected by fewer of Wordsworth's critics because he makes it explicit in the final book of The Prelude, where he tells us that the natural scene which he has been describing appears to the eye of the imagination as "the perfect image of a mighty Mind" (XIII, 69). Perkins, for example, recognizes Wordsworth's use of nature to objectify or "mirror" the poet's psychological processes;<sup>23</sup> and Florence Marsh, in Wordsworth's Imagery: a Study in Poetic Vision, argues that the "seemingly literal" imagery<sup>24</sup> that Wordsworth uses to describe landscape carries symbolic import, that it images forth his intuitive grasp of ultimate identity: "All things blend into one, and the metaphor and simile are the means to the blending, the connecting tissue that holds human and natural together in a unity that is divine."<sup>25</sup>

The time-mind metaphor, however, is the more radical one, and therefore the more widely unrecognized or misunderstood. Wordsworth turned history, his own individual history, his own existence in time to poetic account by revealing it as a hierophany of the timeless. Since memory, in which that history is preserved, is the mortal faculty by which the temporal is transcended, it is, for Wordsworth, the means of





salvation. By preserving the original unfallen imagination of the child, memory restores the fallen imagination of the man, and reveals the identity between child and man.

## II

The Prelude, being the account of this redemptive process occurring within the soul of one individual, of one "man speaking to men," is "the history of sacred events" which is Eliade's definition of myth.<sup>26</sup> As the hero of this myth, a myth of fall and redemption in the Christian Humanist tradition, Wordsworth is Everyman. His preoccupation with himself and his own development, the self-consciousness<sup>27</sup> which many readers, including Keats, have found obtrusive and therefore unpoetic, is justified by his role in the myth.

Ironically, Keats is one of the few of Wordsworth's readers to finally recognize the nature of this myth. While in an early letter he mockingly compares Wordsworth's apparently narcissistic self-consciousness to the attitude of a flower who should say, "admire me I am a violet! dote upon me I am a primrose!"<sup>28</sup> he eventually comes to understand the role of the ego in Wordsworth's vision. Indeed, Keats' growing admiration for Wordsworth can be traced through his letters and contributes to an understanding of both poets. In the letter just quoted he asks rhetorically, "for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain Philosophy engendered in the whims of an Egotist[?]"<sup>29</sup> But three months later, three months in which his "vision into the heart and nature of Man"<sup>30</sup> has been sharpened by the illness of his brother and his reading of Milton, he writes in the



famous "Chamber of Maiden-Thought Letter":

This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open--but all dark--all leading to dark passages--We see not the ballance [sic.] of good and evil. We are in a Mist--We are now in that state--We feel the "burden of the Mystery[.]" . . . It seems to me that [Wordsworth's] Genius is explorative of those dark passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them. [H]e is a Genius and superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them --Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton--. . . He did not think into the human heart as Wordsworth has done[.]<sup>31</sup>

This is surely an unexpected assessment of the arch-poet of self-consciousness, from a fellow poet who formulated an aesthetic theory of "Negative Capability," arguing that poetic genius is the capacity to surrender individual identity to "the sense of Beauty."<sup>32</sup> "Men of Genius . . . have not any individuality,"<sup>33</sup> he insists, and later, "the poetical Character itself . . . has no self,"<sup>34</sup> but in the same letter he acknowledges a class of poetry characterized by a quality he calls "wordsworthian [sic] or egotistical sublime."<sup>35</sup> He does not explain what he means by the phrase, but a still later letter implies that the "egotistical sublime" transforms life into myth: "A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory--and very few eyes can see the Mystery of his life--a life like the scriptures, figurative--which such people can no more make out than they can the [H]ebrew Bible."<sup>36</sup>

Wordsworth read "the Mystery of his life" figuratively, and therefore his autobiographical poem is something more than autobiography in the usual sense of the word. Although he promises Coleridge "the story of [his] life" (I, 667), and insists, "all my Tale is of myself" (III, 197), it is with his life as manifesting a universal pattern and with himself as a "type" of universal or cosmic man that he is concerned. Seen in retrospect through the mythopoeic eye of the creative Imagination





his life reveals its mythic integrity. The mythic truth of "what pass'd within" (III, 174), not empirical accuracy, is his aim. Indeed, to regard the work as an autobiography in the usual sense, that is, as the chronological narrative of a life, can only impede an understanding of the poet's intent, for a comparison of the "figurative" account of his experience as it is presented in The Prelude with the "biographically accurate" facts of his life reveals baffling omissions, condensations, even what amounts to distortion--all together comprising what one critic has called "a misrepresentation of everyday reality."<sup>37</sup> The poet does not mention, for example, his affair with Annette Vallon (except for the veiled account of the ill-fated love that appears in Book IX as the story of Vaudracour and Julia), an event which at least one critic regards as "the deepest experience of Wordsworth's life--the emotional complex from which all his subsequent career flows in its intricacy and uncertainty";<sup>38</sup> but he dwells at length on his intellectual relationship with Beaupuis (IX, 293ff.). He describes in some detail his travels on the continent (VI, 338ff.), but neglects to mention, except for the Snowdon passage, his trips to Wales, which, he implies in "Tintern Abbey," had considerable psychological significance for him. To the reader armed with only basic biographical information, furthermore, it soon becomes apparent that there is an artistic condensation taking place. Whole series of events, such as most of those of his last two years at Cambridge, are dismissed in a few lines, or two or more events may be fused into one. DeSelincourt tells us,<sup>39</sup> for example, that the summer reunion with Dorothy described in Book VI (238ff.) combines several reunions that took place over the course of three years. Still another departure from the usual autobiographical structure is that the poem has a chronological



arrangement in only the loosest sense. The death of his father, occurring in his childhood, is not mentioned until Book XI (366); and again, after recounting his young adulthood at Cambridge, he reverts in Book V to an incident that occurred to him as "a Child not nine years old" (474), the apparition of the drowned man rising from the lake, "a spectre shape/Of terror" (472-473). Then in Book XI he describes an event belonging to the years which precede the beginning of the narrative action, when he was "not six years old" (280), his discovery of a Murderer's name carved on the turf beneath the gibbet where the man had been hanged (258-302).

It is evident then that the "abstracting, conferring, modifying" faculty is at work in The Prelude, transforming personal empirical experience into transpersonal mythic meaning and tracing the universal "lineaments of Man." If Imagination filters out the blinding apocalyptic light from one side, as I have suggested, it also sifts out empirical irrelevancies from the other. Herbert Read believes that Wordsworth "in his life and literary activities reveals more clearly than any other poet in our literature the delicate relations that exist between poetry and the poet's experience,"<sup>40</sup> and that the greatness of The Prelude does not consist in its biographical veracity. "It is not," he says, "a true poem in that sense. . . . It is an idealization of the poet's life, not the reality."<sup>41</sup> If Read means by "reality," empirical reality, and if he is using the term "idealization" in the Platonic sense, then he means that the poem is a "true" account of Wordsworth's spiritual life. Therein lies the "sublime" which, however "egotistical," gives the poem its unique value; for if "The Growth of a Poet's Mind" is a type of the growth of Everyman's mind, if in the poet's individuality is revealed the archetypal





"Self," if, further, his development is the ontogenetic recapitulation of the phylogeny of humanity, revealing "the progressive powers perhaps no less/Of the whole species" (The Excursion, "Prospectus," 64), then Wordsworth is indeed justified in his preoccupation with himself, in his choice of himself as the hero of his myth. "The subjective phases of individual development," says Erich Neumann of the artist, are then "objectively significant for culture."<sup>42</sup>

These phases of development form the mythic structure of The Prelude. Like the structure of "Tintern Abbey" in a more condensed form, it is governed by imagery of ascent, progress, or growth through four levels of experience, from a "worm-like state" (X, 837) to the transfiguration that takes place on the summit of Mount Snowdon. It is misleading, however, to see such a development as chronologically linear. It is a "development," rather, in the etymological sense, as an integral and organic "unfolding" of an eternally present potential, a favourite theme of visionary literature and often embodied in the image of the rose, as in Dante and Eliot, or that of the worm which becomes a moth,<sup>43</sup> as in Blake. In Wordsworth the theme and the image which embody it are so closely identified that the most one can say is that the one is the other, that the unfolding of the life of an individual is also the image in which the theme is embodied.

The first stage or phase, that in which the poet is a "naked savage" (I, 304), represents phylogenetically the primitive state of participation mystique in which the individual participates in the primal unity that existed before the fall into subject-object dichotomy; ontogenetically it is the state of childhood, characterized by unconscious





animal activity, the "glad animal movements" referred to in "Tintern Abbey" (74); and mythologically it is the state of primal innocence symbolized by the childhood "Paradise" in which the poet says he was reared (VIII, 144). Then follows the separation of the self-assertive, differentiating ego-consciousness from the primal unity, the birth of awareness from unthinking animal vitality. The poet's consciousness "splits" (a favourite word of Wordsworth) in two, like the "grey Stone/ Of native rock" in the centre of the village square (II, 33-34) which was split when the poet returned there "After long absence" (II, 37). In the same passage, immediately preceding these lines, the poet speaks of having "two consciousnesses" (32), consciousness of himself "and of some other Being" (33). Unconscious child has now become conscious youth, aware of "otherness," both aesthetically, as the colour and form of the world of nature, which "haunted him like a passion" ("Tintern Abbey," 28), and sympathetically, as human personality represented by characters such as the old soldier encountered during his first vacation from Cambridge (IV, 400ff.), or the blind beggar of London, who seemed to admonish him "from another world" (VII, 622). Mythologically this phase is that of the "Departure,"<sup>44</sup> in which the hero leaves his place of origin, separates himself from the "World Parents" and embarks on a hazardous mission. As he begins his journey through the fallen world the horizons of his soul are extended and his "growing faculties" (II, 338) enable him to respond to the macrocosm with increasing emotional intensity, in preparation for his initiation into the third phase, that of intellectual understanding and moral responsibility. Now the "Road of Trials" takes him through the mythic underworld, the "weary labyrinth" (X, 923) of intellectual paradox and moral despair. Biographically this



phase corresponds to the critical five years between the two visits to the Wye River referred to in "Tintern Abbey," the years of his restless refractory residence in London and his passionate involvement in the political fate of France. His intellectual consciousness of himself as a moral being became so acute during this period that "sick, wearied out with contrarieties," he "yielded up moral questions in despair" (X, 900-901). The powers of analytical "Understanding," the Godwinian "subtleties" (X, 776), had failed him and only a regenerative "Return" to the imaginative synthesis or primal unity experienced in childhood and preserved in memory as "spots of time" could restore the power needed to overcome the dragon that guards the treasure and prepare the way for the hieros gamos, the "great consummation."

### III

The Prelude can be further understood as myth in terms of its kinship with other visionary genres in which the myths of the Christian Humanist tradition have been embodied. Certainly Wordsworth's sense of mission as a poet, of being engaged with fellow poets "even as Prophets" in "a mighty scheme of truth" (XII, 301-302), of being "joint-labourers" with them in a work of "redemption" (XIII, 439-441), places him in the oracular tradition that goes back beyond Milton to the Old Testament Prophets. Abbie Potts' study of the evolution of the poem through early manuscripts lends support to the view that Wordsworth sees himself continuing such a tradition, by demonstrating how the "arid sermon" of the early versions eventually takes on the form and vocabulary of "a parable or myth,"<sup>45</sup> bearing, like the religious pageants of the late middle ages, "the story of mankind in its noblest mythic form."<sup>46</sup> She





then proceeds to demonstrate the kinship of The Prelude with almost every genre in the Christian tradition, including Christ's parables, mediaeval mystery cycles, Spenserian romance, The Pilgrim's Progress, and finally Milton's epics,<sup>47</sup> to which she gives special attention, drawing a number of parallels between The Prelude and both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, and suggesting that at various points in the poem Wordsworth is respectively Adam,<sup>48</sup> Satan<sup>49</sup> and Christ.<sup>50</sup> In The Prelude, she argues, we have a modification of the epic tradition with the poet himself filling the role of hero and redeemer: "Like the 'one greater man' of Paradise Regained, the 'Poet' of The Prelude has faced a constantly more subtle series of temptations. . . . Thus, in his representative nature as Poet, he has illustrated for all men the perils threatening the poetic or imaginative life."<sup>51</sup>

In order to recognize the poet himself as mythic hero, however, one does not need to see the poem as an epic. R.T. Harrison, in an unpublished article entitled "Wordsworth as the Hero of The Prelude," finds in the poem a series of passages which together form a chivalric romance, of which Wordsworth is the hero or protagonist passing through the six phases into which Frye divides the career of the hero of romance.<sup>52</sup> He notes that Wordsworth's account of his childhood can be seen as the chivalric hero's "Arcadian childhood" in which he is prepared for "the quest stage," the transition to this stage occurring at the end of Book IV where, returning home at dawn from a village dance, the poet experiences a kind of epiphany in which he is transformed into "a dedicated Spirit" (IV, 337). In the subsequent account of his return to Cambridge and his journey through the Alps he is the knight errant embarking on the perilous quest and engaging in spiritual "lists."<sup>53</sup>



Harrison gives special attention to the Simplon Pass episode, (as I do too in the next chapter) suggesting that it "relates to conventional romance features of descent into the den or body of a dragon, related in turn to the Biblical story of Jonah, whom Christ took as his prototype."<sup>54</sup> It is clear at least that the experience was for Wordsworth of a typological and numinous nature and that he consciously, at least in retrospect, recognized it as such, for it seemed to him:

. . . like workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,  
Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
The types and symbols of Eternity,  
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.  
(VI, 556-572, italics mine).

Although Wordsworth was characteristically Romantic in his early tendency toward religious heresy,<sup>55</sup> the sacramental, or what Potts calls "liturgical"<sup>56</sup> nature of The Prelude is undeniable. The creative process, the main theme of the poem, is for Wordsworth, Miss Potts argues, a sacrament, an association with "Godhead." Poetic life as a mode of participation in divine life "shares the generic nature of the Eucharist."<sup>57</sup> It is no coincidence that Wordsworth is "foremost of the Band" (XIII, 35) in the ascent of Snowdon, if he sees himself as a priest in a religious procession, leading his band of followers to the place where a rite is to be enacted, or an oracle interpreted. The view of Wordsworth as a poet-priest finds strong support both in the Preface of 1800, where he speaks of the poet as one who "singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth . . . ." <sup>58</sup> and also throughout The Prelude. It is explicit both in Book I, in which the poet speaks of his "spirit" as "clothed in priestly robe" (61) and as "singled out, as it might seem/For holy services" (62-63) and in Book XII, in which, nearing





the climactic Snowdon episode, he declares:

Be mine to follow with no timid step  
Where knowledge led me; it shall be my pride  
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,  
Speaking no dream but things oracular . . . (XII, 250-2).

The image which the poet creates of himself in Book VIII is even that of a kind of Adam-Christ: he is both fallen man and redeemer. From the innocence of his childhood "Paradise" (144) he has fallen into a world of "guilt and wretchedness" (658), of "uproar and misrule,/Disquiet, danger and obscurity" (663-4), yet he retains his redemptive power as a second "Adam," who, "though fallen from bliss" (819), leads the ascent to the "purity inviolate" (814) of the divine:

Neither guilt nor vice,  
Debasement of the body or the mind,  
Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,  
Which was not lightly passed, but often scann'd  
Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust  
In what we may become . . . (VIII, 802-807).

As universal man, redeemed and redeeming, the poet is himself the living word, the link between human and divine, a kind of Christ in whom Man is revealed "instinct/With Godhead" (VIII, 638-639).

#### IV

An interpretation of The Prelude that emphasizes its liturgical or ritualistic qualities and Wordsworth's role as poet-priest must take into account the significance of the title itself which implies a relationship to a larger structure. The term "prelude" is often used for "voluntary," the piece of music played at the start of a church service. While it was Mary Wordsworth, not the poet himself, who gave the poem its title, it is at least an interesting speculation that she may





have wanted to re-inforce the liturgical connotations of the metaphor that Wordsworth used to explain the relationship between this poem and the larger work of which it was to be a part: "the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other . . . as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church."<sup>59</sup> The liturgical tone of The Prelude can, indeed, almost be said to anticipate Wordsworth's eventual return to the fold. It is no surprise then that in The Excursion, the only other completed part of a projected three-part poem to be called The Recluse, "a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature and Society,"<sup>60</sup> the visionary gleam fades, to be replaced by a prosaic assertion of beliefs that have petrified into orthodoxy. It is generally agreed that for this reason The Excursion is inferior to The Prelude. It has not only been called "one of the dullest books of its kind in the English language,"<sup>61</sup> and "a drowsy, frowsy poem" (Don Juan, III, xciv), but has been compared to Robinson Crusoe's boat stuck in the sand,<sup>62</sup> and merely its Preface reported to have caused Blake "a stomach complaint, which nearly killed him."<sup>63</sup> The insults heaped upon the poem, however, do not absolve the critic from the responsibility of giving it some attention, if only out of respect for the relationship that it bears to the earlier achievement.

The Excursion is not avowedly autobiographical in the way that The Prelude is, yet the poet is still, as the first-person narrator, an important persona, the subject of the work being "the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement."<sup>64</sup> It is not difficult, furthermore, to detect autobiographical elements in the three fictional characters whose histories the poet relates. Indeed it is possible to see the four characters of the poem as forming the Jungian "quaternity,



or squared circle of the self."<sup>65</sup> That is, the integral "I" of The Prelude whose development is traced through four succeeding stages of development, is, in The Excursion, split into four "states of the soul," each represented by a separate character. The narrator is the "I" as artist, whose role is to draw together the alienated parts of the psyche into a mythic synthesis, and it is to be noted that in conversation among the characters of the poem he acts merely as an interlocutor, representing no defined intellectual position by which he can be identified. The "Solitary" is the self as Byronic Hero, the despondent, despairing, ego-self who has withdrawn from the world to live as a "Recluse" in a valley (evoking Bunyan's "Valley of Despond" and the "pit of lowest Erebus" (36) mentioned in the "Prospectus"). Like the hero of The Prelude, the Solitary has experienced abortive love and political disillusionment (Book II, passim), which destroyed "a proud and most presumptuous confidence/In the transcendent wisdom of the age" (II, 235-236), but, also like the hero of The Prelude, he is never lost to three redemptive influences at work in his soul: the image of the Divine Child, this time an actual child (II, 601) replacing the Child of memory; the eternal forms of Nature represented by the twin peaks he can see from the window of his cottage (II, 692); and the epiphanies or "spots of time," such as the vision of the Holy City which he has experienced when returning alone from the search for the old shepherd lost in the mountains (827-881), a vision such as "Hebrew Prophets . . . beheld" (867). The Solitary's "Despondency Corrected," furthermore, corresponds in some degree to the Poet's "Imagination Restored" in The Prelude, both being variations of the archetypal "Paradise Regained."





The Wanderer is a type of the Sage (IV, 420), or "wise old man," who, according to Jungian symbology, is "a typical personification of the Self" appearing when an individual has wrestled seriously and long with the contents of his unconscious and has reached "the innermost nucleus of the psyche."<sup>66</sup> He plays the role of guide, initiator and guardian, or a kind of guru or "priest" again, who leads the uninitiated up a "sublime ascent" (IX, 93) to the "final Eminence" (IX, 52) and invites them to share a perspective from which the "visible frame of things/Relinquishes its hold" (IX, 63-64) and all that can be heard is "the loud voice/Of waters" (66-67). At the risk of belabouring the obvious I should draw attention to the affinity between the Sage of The Excursion and the transformed Hero on the summit of Mount Snowdon, both of whom have achieved a spiritual synthesis which transforms the world as the moon transforms the landscape (The Excursion, IV, 1062-1070).

The Poet, the Solitary and the Wanderer all represent Man in his capacity as private individual: the Poet alone in his creativity, the Solitary alienated by his disillusionment, the Wanderer alone in his travels. The Pastor, the last member of the "quaternio" to be introduced, is the Self as participator in the universal brotherhood of heroism, the Self that hears "the still sad music of humanity" in the histories of the simple, virtuous villagers who lie in the churchyard. In the tragedy of their lives are revealed "the universal forms/Of human nature" (VIII, 14-15) which all men share, but of which the life of "Him who bled/Upon the cross" (IX, 721-722) is the great exemplar.

These four characters, then, form the totality of "the individual Mind that keeps her own/Inviolable retirement" ("Prospectus," 19-20), the same mythic "I" whose history Wordsworth traced in The Prelude. In its



form, also, The Excursion is akin to The Prelude. While Wordsworth tells us that "something of dramatic form is adopted,"<sup>67</sup> the later poem, like The Prelude, makes use of a number of epic conventions which relate it to the heroic tradition of the epic. In an excerpt from the first book of The Recluse which serves as "a kind of Prospectus of the design and scope of the whole poem,"<sup>68</sup> the poet states his theme in a manner that echoes the sonorous tones of the opening of Paradise Lost:

Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,  
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;  
Of blessèd consolations in distress;  
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;  
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;  
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own  
Inviolatè retirement, subject there  
To Conscience only, and the law supreme  
Of that Intelligence which governs all--  
I sing:--'fit audience let me find though few!' (14-23).

Then there follows an Invocation to the Miltonic muse Urania, "or a greater Muse" (26), whom a few lines later the poet addresses as the "prophetic Spirit" (83) who "dost possess/A metropolitan temple in the hearts/Of mighty Poets," just as Milton's "Spirit" prefers "Before all temples the upright heart and pure" (Paradise Lost, I, 12). But where Milton "intends to soar/Above the Aonian mount" (9-10), Wordsworth shall tread the "shadowy ground" (23) of "thè Mind of Man" (40). Also included in this passage is a reference to the mythic Paradise or Golden Age, which, the poet assures us, is not "a history only of departed things" (50) but "a simple produce of the common day" (55) when "the discerning intellect of Man" is "wedded to this goodly universe/In love and holy passion . . ." (52-54).

Apart from these minor epic conventions the poet's subjective experiences form, as they do in The Prelude, a kind of spiritual "Odyssey"





or epic journey, during which the "hero" encounters both the heights and depths of human experience and is influenced by a variety of both human and supernatural powers. The word "excursion" itself suggests in its etymology the pattern of the mythic "journey out," and hence links the poem with the whole tradition of mythic journeys, quests and pilgrimages.

## V

The Prelude, whose subject is the "Poet's Mind," and The Excursion, whose subject is the "Mind of Man," are both accounts of the unfolding of a Soul, and hence constitute "sacred history." The earlier work is the more successful because there the Man and the Poet form an identity. The "origin and progress of his own powers" are fully identified with the "record" of that process, which was to be the poet's "preparation" for constructing "a literary Work that might live."<sup>69</sup> That is to say, in The Prelude the growth of the soul is identified with the process of creating a poem or "myth," and both processes, as the acting out of a sacred ritual in which poet and reader together participate, inform the structure of the work. In The Excursion this identity is lost. Just as the poet as narrator divides himself from the other three mythic beings that constitute the "quaternio" of his psyche, so his individual "Understanding" detaches itself from the "Mind of Man," and merely describes a process with which it can no longer identify, or in which it is no longer involved.

Even this decline in vision, however, this loss of "kingly" power, this sinking of the sun-hero from the zenith into the west and death is part of the life that is myth, a myth whose hero we shall now follow through his various transformations.





## CHAPTER VI

### TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE HERO IN THE PRELUDE

#### I

Interpretations of the myth of the hero, whether their emphasis be ontological, as it is in the writings of Erich Neumann and Joseph Campbell, or more strictly psychoanalytical, as in those of Otto Rank, agree in the importance they attach to the relationship of the hero with his "parents." With his birth begins "the struggle with the first Parents."<sup>1</sup> And his entire career can be seen as an attempt to achieve, by means of a series of transformations, autonomy or individuality, but, paradoxically, only as a prelude to his inevitable return to his original home, or in metaphysical terms, as a preparation for the final dissolution of the ego and its resubmergence in "the ocean of Godhead."<sup>2</sup> As the myth of Oedipus illustrates so forcibly, the hero's endeavour to escape the "Matrix of Destiny"<sup>3</sup> by departing from his home and setting forth in quest of his identity ensures that he will encounter his parents again and requires that he either overcome them or be reconciled with them.

The birth of the hero assumes the prior existence of parents; hence the great cycles of myth divide the cosmos into the masculine and feminine principles, which are supposed to have come into being in their turn as a result of the splitting in two of the "uroboros,"<sup>4</sup> or "cosmic egg,"<sup>5</sup> or "cosmogonic round."<sup>6</sup> "Herewith a great crisis, a rift," says Campbell, "splits the created world into two apparently contradictory planes of being."<sup>7</sup> These opposing principles Neumann calls the "World Parents," stressing that the uroboros is predominantly feminine and that



the "separation of the World Parents" is a further development of the differentiation between the benevolent and fearful aspects of the hermaphroditic "Great Mother."<sup>8</sup>

The hero's "first task," according to Campbell, "is to experience consciously the antecedent stages of the cosmogonic cycle; to break back through the epochs of emanation."<sup>9</sup> That means that Wordsworth as the hero of his life must re-experience with the consciousness of retrospect the differentiation of which Neumann speaks. As he looks back upon his childhood the poet recognizes that he was "foster'd" by two principles, "by beauty and by fear" (I, 306).<sup>10</sup> While the Nature that he remembers is predominantly maternal, that is, tender and protective, "seeking him/ With gentlest visitation" (I, 366-367), he also recalls "Severer interventions, ministry/More palpable" (I, 370-371) and "the impressive discipline of fear" (I, 631).

There are two episodes in Book I which illustrate this more "paternal" side of his "fostering." The first is the theft of the "bird/ Which was the captive on another's toils" (I, 326-327). After "the deed was done" he heard, he tells us,

among the solitary hills  
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds  
Of undistinguishable motion, steps  
Almost as silent as the turf they trod. (I, 329-332).

From a psychoanalytical standpoint the "low breathings" are a projection of his super-ego, or paternal side of the psyche, representing the authority and discipline which make the feminine object<sup>11</sup> taboo, and transgression of which creates guilt. In terms of the Judaic-Christian myth, the silent steps are typological reverberations from those of "the Lord God walking in the garden" (Genesis 3:8) after the first Man





violated the patriarchal law by tasting the fruit proffered by the woman.

The second episode again involves violation of the taboo object and hence transgression of patriarchal law. The poet recounts how one evening he took a shepherd's skiff from "a rocky Cave" (I, 375) and "lustily" dipping his oars into "the silent Lake" went "heaving through the water" (I, 401-404). It is hardly necessary to labour the erotic significance of the imagery here.<sup>12</sup> From a psycho-mythological view the "huge Cliff" which "uprear'd its head" (I, 406-408) and "growing still in stature . . . /Rose up between me and the stars" (I, 409-410) is a phallic symbol of the paternal principle which threatens the child's bond with the Mother. The poet goes on to describe, in archetypal imagery of regression to the Mother, how, fearful of this "living thing" (I, 411) which seemed to pursue him, he stole his way "through the silent water . . . /Back to the Cavern of the Willow tree" (I, 413-414). From that moment on he was aware of an order of invisible things, of "huge and mighty Forms" (I, 424) moving through his mind that gave to the "forms and images" of the visible world "a breath/And everlasting motion" (I, 430-431). Wordsworth is describing that metaphysical phenomenon to which Campbell refers when he says, "The world-generating spirit of the father passes into the manifold of earthly experience through a transforming medium--the mother of the world."<sup>13</sup> Through an intensely sensuous, even erotic, experience of empirical Nature the developing youth awakened to an awareness, at the time not apprehended, of "the spirit of the father" hovering behind her.

The two principles of genesis are expressed throughout the early books of The Prelude both as philosophical concepts, such as "God and Nature" (II, 446), or as a "plastic power" within himself that 'commun'd'



with "external things" (II, 381-386), and, more effectively, as pairs of symbolic images suggestive of the masculine and feminine principles: "sun" and "moon" (II, 181-202), "square" and "round" (II, 210), "wand" and "river"<sup>14</sup> (II, 213-214), "creator and receiver" (II, 273), penetrating light and dark cavern (III, 246-247), "sentiment of Being" (II, 420) and "mighty depth of waters"<sup>15</sup> (428).

The most consciously used and fully elaborated pair of polar images, however, are the Stone and the Shell, which figure prominently in the account of a "Friend's" dream of the Bedouin at the beginning of Book V. A thorough-going archetypal interpretation of this passage is that of W.H. Auden in The Enchafèd Flood,<sup>16</sup> in which the stone-shell symbolism is seen as representing an archetypal pattern of polarity which has traditionally centred on the images of sea and desert, as it does in the passage under discussion. The sea, says Auden, stands for "the primordial undifferentiated flux"<sup>17</sup> of dynamic chaos, perpetual motion, teeming life, out of which civilization has emerged, and the shell associated with it represents poetic truth, prophecy or inspiration.<sup>18</sup> The latter constitutes a threat to civilization in that it can overwhelm the rational order represented by the stone.<sup>19</sup> The desert is the fallen rational order: that is, the positive principle represented by the stone carried to the extreme of stasis and sterility. Of particular importance here is Auden's concept, on the one hand, of the patriarchal authoritative God as an aspect of the desert vision, and, on the other, of the train of imagery associated with the shell and the sea (moon, mist, night) as "maternal."<sup>20</sup> This connection between the desert and the Hebraic image of God as a "stern father"<sup>21</sup> is noted, too, by the Frankforts in The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man. They explain it as follows:





. . . the desert as a metaphysical experience loomed very large for the Hebrews and colored all their valuations. . . .wherever we find reverence for the phenomena of life and growth, we find preoccupation with the immanence of the divine and with the form of its manifestation. But in the stark solitude of the desert, where nothing changes, nothing moves (except man at his own free will) . . . there we may expect the image of God to transcend concrete phenomena altogether.<sup>22</sup>

Since Wordsworth's preoccupation is with the "immanence of the divine," it is not the father-god of the Judaic-Christian tradition which dominates his universe, but the more ancient mother-goddess. The Nature that he worships is predominantly feminine and maternal, and his relationship with it is a "filial bond" (II, 263) symbolized by the image of the babe in his mother's arms. This relationship is for Wordsworth the "type" of all relationships, for it is the one that first "connects" the individual "with the world" and saves him from the fate of alienation. This primal experience of unity indeed, says Wordsworth, is responsible for "the first/Poetic spirit of our human life." I quote the passage in full, not only for its importance to my argument, but because it heralds the theories of modern psychology regarding the importance of the child's relationship to the mother in the whole development of the psyche:

Bless'd the infant Babe,  
 (For with my best conjectures I would trace  
 The progress of our being) blest the Babe,  
 Nurs'd in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps  
 Upon his Mother's breast, who, when his soul  
 Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,  
 Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!  
 Such feelings pass into his torpid life  
 Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind  
 Even [in the first trial of its powers]  
 Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine  
 In one appearance, all the elements  
 And parts of the same object, else detach'd  
 And loth to coalesce. Thus, day by day,  
 Subjected to the discipline of love,  
 His organs and recipient faculties  
 Are quicken'd, are more vigorous, his mind spreads,  
 Tenacious of the forms which it receives  
 In one beloved presence, nay and more,





In that most apprehensive habitude  
 And those sensations which have been deriv'd  
 From this beloved Presence, there exists  
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts  
 All objects through all intercourse of sense.  
 No outcast he, bewilder'd and depress'd;  
 Along his infant veins are interfus'd  
 The gravitation and the filial bond  
 Of nature, that connect him with the world.  
 Emphatically such a Being lives,  
 An inmate of this active universe;  
 From nature largely he receives; nor so  
 Is satisfied, but largely gives again,  
 For feeling has to him imparted strength,  
 And powerful in all sentiments of grief,  
 Of exultation, fear, and joy, his mind,  
 Even as an agent of the one great mind,  
 Creates, creator and receiver both,  
 Working but in alliance with the works  
 Which it beholds.--Such, verily, is the first  
 Poetic spirit of our human life;  
 By uniform control of after years  
 In most abated or suppress'd, in some,  
 Through every change of growth or of decay,  
 Pre-eminent till death. (II, 237-280).

In the implication here that the relationship with the mother is the source of poetic inspiration, we have a hint of the psychoanalytic theory that the artist experiences an unresolved Oedipal attachment to the mother imago. However scornful we may be, as literary critics, of the psychoanalytic approach to poetry, we cannot ignore the evidence in the poetry itself that Wordsworth is preoccupied with symbols of the Magna Mater. Nature herself, as we have seen, is a maternal symbol. The aspects of her physiognomy which the poet emphasizes, furthermore, are those associated with her nourishing character. While I would hesitate to go so far as to suggest that mountains evoke a mammary image,<sup>23</sup> Wordsworth's apostrophe to them at the conclusion of Book II attributes to them a decidedly nourishing character. They are the source of the faith in human nature which the poet has retained through times "Of dereliction and dismay" (II, 457):



the gift is yours,  
 Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed  
 My lofty speculations; and in thee,  
 For this uneasy heart of ours I find  
 A never-failing principle of joy,  
 And purest passion. (II, 461-466, italics mine).

Coming at the end of Book II, whose central image is that of the child "upon his Mother's breast" (II, 241), the choice of the word "fed," whether a conscious one or not, evokes the earlier image. While such an interpretation may seem forced, it is more consistent with the total network of maternal imagery in The Prelude than the traditional patriarchal association of mountains with Jehovah, as we find it, for example, in Bunyan's "Delectable Mountains." Since Wordsworth is the product of the patriarchal Judaic-Protestant culture, it is the more remarkable that he sees as feminine the contours of the natural world.

Rivers, lakes and sea constitute another body of maternal imagery that figures predominantly throughout the early books of The Prelude. "The maternal significance of water," says Jung, "is one of the clearest interpretations of symbols in the whole field of mythology."<sup>24</sup> Yet of those of Wordsworth's critics who have made a study of his water imagery,<sup>25</sup> none has given adequate attention to its maternal aspect. While agreeing, for example, that the poet turns to poetic account his birth beside a river (I, 271-289), they miss the typological implications of which Jung reminds us in the following passage concerning the maternal significance of water in the myths of Mithras and Christ:

[Mithras] is represented as having been born beside a river, while Christ experienced his "rebirth" in the Jordan. Christ, moreover, was born of . . . the sempiternal fons amoris or Mother of God, whom pagan-Christian legend turned into a nymph of the spring. The spring is also found in Mithraism. . . . In the Vedas, the waters are called matritamah, 'most maternal.' All living things rise, like the sun, from water, and sink into it again at evening. Born of springs, rivers, lakes, and seas, man





at death comes to the waters of the Styx, and there embarks on the "night sea journey." Those black waters of death are the water of life, for death with its cold embrace is the maternal womb, just as the sea devours the sun but brings it forth again.<sup>26</sup>

While the sea has less biographical significance in the early books than lakes and rivers, it appears twice as a poetic figure, both times in descriptions of the poet's "filial bond with nature." In Book I Wordsworth asks rhetorically whether it was with a merely "vulgar hope" that Nature had been moved to

make  
The surface of the universal earth  
With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear,  
Work like a sea? (I, 498-501).

Then in Book II, in the same passage in which he speaks of "Nature and her overflowing soul" (II, 416), he says, "I, at this time/Saw blessings spread around me like a sea" (II, 413-414). Again Jung offers a possible explanation for the sureness of the poet's instinct in choosing this particular image:

The phonetic connection between G. Mar, and F. mère, and the various words for 'sea' (Lat. mare, G. Meer, F. mer) is certainly remarkable, though etymologically accidental. May it perhaps point back to the "great primordial image" of the mother, who was once our only world and later became the symbol of the whole world?<sup>27</sup>

It is not only natural phenomena which function as maternal symbols in The Prelude. In the same book in which he describes the babe at the mother's breast, and in which he complains of the difficulty of tracing the mysterious processes of the soul (II, 203-237), he interpolates an apparently literal account of an inn that he visited frequently as a school-boy (II, 145-180). The visual details which he remembers about this building produce an interesting cumulative effect on a reader sensitive to typological associations, for they comprise a list of the



most widely diffused maternal and erotic symbols: decanters, glasses, blood-red wine,<sup>28</sup> garden, grove, water, trees, strawberries, mellow cream, lake. The passage concludes with an account of leaving the inn to row "over the dusky Lake, and to the beach/Of some small Island" (II, 172-173), and of how the "still water lay upon my mind/Even with a weight of pleasure" (II, 177-178). In its total effect the passage suggests the abandonment of the infantile psyche to the feminine principles of passivity and sensuality.

Wordsworth, of course, found more obvious symbols of the Mother in human figures. Even his own "honour'd Mother" (V, 257) is transformed by the mythopoeic imagination into a symbol of the universal "maternal bond" (V, 249), which unites not only the Brood to the "Parent Hen" but the Parent Hen herself to the same bond, by the principle of generation (V, 250). Although Wordsworth lost his own mother when he was but eight years of age (V, 256-290), he found two substitutes: first, "old Grandame Earth," who, he tells us in his indictment of England's educational system, "is grieved" to find her children neglecting the "playthings" she designs for them (V, 346-349); and second, his sister Dorothy, with whom his relationship has long been an enigma to biographers because of its intensity, which far surpassed that usually existing between brother and sister. It has not gone unnoticed that the attachment was erotic and therefore potentially incestuous,<sup>29</sup> but the several references to Dorothy in The Prelude imply, rather, that she symbolized the presence of the feminine element in the poet's life, the element of whose first human symbol he had been deprived so early by his mother's death, and which is so necessary to poetic inspiration.<sup>30</sup> A passage in Book VI describes a reunion with his sister during a summer vacation from





Cambridge. Since, according to DeSelincourt, this is a fictitious event, being a composite of "events which took place during three years,"<sup>31</sup> one is justified in finding symbolic significance in the poet's choice of a river bank as the site of the imaginary reunion (VI, 218-219). While Arthur Wormhoudt's interpretation of this passage is perhaps too anatomical--"She is immediately associated with the river as a symbol of the giving breast"<sup>32</sup>--we know from the famous passage on the Imagination in Book XIII (166-188) that the "stream" is associated with Wordsworth's Muse. In another tribute to his sister in Book XI, he refers to her as a "gentle Visitant," suggesting supernatural powers, and attributes to her, as representative of her sex, a wisdom superior to man's in that it is free of the "barren intermeddling subtleties" (XI, 204) of the male intellect.

There are two passages, however, which raise Dorothy's significance to the archetypal level of almost a Beatrice or a Gretchen. Referring to the dark night of the soul which he experienced during his residence in France, Wordsworth goes on:

and then it was  
That the beloved Woman in whose sight  
Those days were pass'd, now speaking in a voice  
Of sudden admonition, like a brook  
That does but cross a lonely road, and now  
Seen, heard and felt, and caught at every turn,  
Companion never lost through many a league,  
Maintain'd for me a saving intercourse  
With my true self; for, though impair'd and changed  
Than as a clouded, not a waning moon:  
She, in the midst of all, preserv'd me still  
A Poet . . . (X, 909-920, italics mine).

The "saving intercourse/With my true self" is a reminder of the Byronic incest motif with its narcissistic overtones, for the "Sister of my heart" (XIII, 339), as he calls Dorothy in a later reference, is





clearly an incarnation of his own femininity or "anima," and acts as a mediator between the masculine spirit ("animus") and the Magna Mater or "mother of the world." Dorothy's function in the poet's development is made explicit in the final reference to her:

I too exclusively esteem'd that love,  
 And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings,  
 Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down  
 This over-stereness; but for thee, sweet Friend,  
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had been  
 Far longer what by Nature it was framed,  
 Longer retain'd its countenance severe,  
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds  
 Familiar, and a favourite of the Stars:  
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,  
 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,  
 And teach the little birds to build their nests  
 And warble in its chambers. (XIII, 224-236).

The relationship with Dorothy needs no explanation more murky than that from his mother's death onward she was the most influential human embodiment of femininity in his life.

## II

Wordsworth's image of himself as a child united by a "filial bond" to the maternal universe is closely associated with his identity as a Poet, for the poet's vision is akin to that of the child. Indeed "the infant sensibility,/Great birthright of our Being" (II, 285-286) preserved in memory and rediscovered by the adult is, according to Erich Neumann, the source of creativity: ". . . only that man is creative who holds himself open to the transpersonal, that man from whom the period of childhood experience, which takes this openness to the transpersonal for granted, has not departed."<sup>33</sup> The Child of the "Intimations Ode," the poem around which the controversy about the child



symbol in Wordsworth principally revolves, is the "best Philosopher" (110) because when the archetype of the child is recovered from memory and re-integrated into the adult psyche it becomes the bearer of those truths "Which we are striving all our lives to find" (116). From the Rainbow, Rose and Moon of childhood recalled with nostalgia early in the poem to the setting sun at the end, the work is pervaded with cyclic imagery suggesting the reaching back or "Return" through memory to "a unitary reality," as Neumann calls it, in which personal and transpersonal are bound up with each other, and the personal locality with an invisible world:

From childhood onward the creative individual is captivated by his experience of the unitary reality of childhood; he returns over and over again to the great hieroglyphic images of archetypal existence. They were mirrored for the first time in the well of childhood and there they remain until, recollecting, we bend over the rim of the well and rediscover them, forever unchanged.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's use of the child image in the "Intimations Ode,"<sup>35</sup> several of Wordsworth's critics have been perceptive enough to recognize the archetypal significance of that image. For Florence Marsh the child of the Ode is the "supreme symbol" of "the life of the spirit," or of "the inner creative life."<sup>36</sup> For Wilson Knight the child is a symbol of the eternal Eden which the adult poet carries within him.<sup>37</sup> Knight goes further, calling the figure the Holy Child, the child who Isaiah prophesies "shall lead them," the child whom the adult must rediscover in himself else he shall "in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>38</sup> Maud Bodkin, too, finds a sacramental meaning in the image, which reveals "every human birth as presenting the mystery of an incarnation."<sup>39</sup>





The child of The Prelude, the offspring of memory and imagination, bears the same transpersonal significance, for the poet's childhood, "recollected in tranquillity," is revealed as the "miraculous childhood, by which it is shown that a special manifestation of the immanent divine principle has become incarnate in the world. . . ."40 Hence the poet can refer to himself as a "chosen Son" with "Holy powers and faculties" (III, 82-84). As poet, he has an unusual ability to recognize the "intimations" of his divine origins in

Those recollected hours that have the charm  
Of visionary things, and lovely forms  
And sweet sensations that throw back our life  
And almost make our Infancy itself  
A visible scene, on which the sun is shining . . .  
(I, 659-663).

The child's "openness to the transpersonal" referred to by Neumann is what Wordsworth calls "unconscious intercourse/With the eternal Beauty" (I, 589-590). This phrase implies an important distinction between the child's vision of the world and the poet's. The poet's intercourse with the eternal is no longer only unconscious, and he can, therefore, no longer partake of the child's innocence. Alec King explains the distinction thus:

. . . the wisdom of life compels the child away from his beatitude of innocence to reach a more difficult and fuller beatitude if he can.  
. . . The child turning away from the effortless unity of being into which he was born, turns away out of courage, not his own, but life's; for he must undertake the folly and confusion and violence of human existence as well as its ecstasy, not to be subdued by them, but to bring them into unity, more difficult, more encompassing, than anything the child knows. God, we might say, deliberately pushes man out of Eden, in order that man may work upon the formless chaos outside, and bring it back if he can, into this garden redeemed.<sup>41</sup>

Wordsworth himself identifies childhood, "when all knowledge is delight/And sorrow is not there" (II, 306-307), with the mythical Garden



of Eden. In Book III he speaks of being "train'd up in paradise/Among sweet garlands and delightful sounds" (III, 377-378). That it is a maternal paradise, furthermore, is suggested by his reference in the same passage to being "bred up in Nature's lap . . . even/As a spoil'd Child" (III, 358-359). The psychoanalytical identification of the mythic Paradise with the mother-child bond finds an arresting example in Wordsworth's poetry, according to Arthur Wormhoudt, who argues, convincingly, that the nostalgia for a lost paradise expressed so poignantly in the last line of the "Intimations Ode" as "Thoughts that lie too deep for tears" is that of "the child inconsolable for the loss of its mother."<sup>42</sup>

The identity between childhood and Eden is made even more explicit in Book VIII in a passage which, as DeSelincourt notes, "is strongly reminiscent in style, construction, and phrasing" of certain passages in Paradise Lost in which Milton "calls to memory various scenes famed in history or fiction, only to dismiss them as unworthy of comparison with Eden."<sup>43</sup> Wordsworth uses the same technique to convey the beauty of the Paradise in which he was reared. He begins:

Beauteous the domain  
Where to the sense of beauty first my heart  
Was open'd, tract more exquisitely fair  
Than . . . (VIII, 119-122).

Then follows a description of the lavish pleasure garden of a Chinese Emperor,<sup>44</sup> after which the poet concludes, "But lovelier far than this the Paradise/Where I was rear'd . . . (VIII, 144-145).

An important symbol associated with both Wordsworth's personal paradise and the Garden of Eden is the tree, which, says Jung, has











as a symbol of his reluctance to abandon the maternal source of his inspiration. He assures us that, in spite of worldly distractions, he retained throughout this time "the Poet's soul" (55), and in the same passage describes the "single Tree" with which his "Sweet meditations" were associated:

A single Tree '  
 There was, no doubt yet standing there, an Ash  
 With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreath'd;  
 Up from the ground and almost to the top  
 The trunk and master branches everywhere  
 Were green with ivy; and the lightsome twigs  
 And outer spray profusely tipp'd with seeds  
 That hung in yellow tassels and festoons,  
 Moving or still, a Favourite trimm'd out  
 By Winter for himself, as if in pride,  
 And with outlandish grace. Oft have I stood  
 Foot-bound, uplooking at this lovely Tree  
 Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere  
 Of magic fiction, verse of mine perhaps  
 May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self  
 Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,  
 More bright appearances could scarcely see  
 Of human Forms and superhuman Powers,  
 Than I beheld, standing on winter nights  
 Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth. (VI, 90-109).

Indeed, this sensitive and imaginative young poet mooning beneath his fairy tree did not welcome the patriarchal side of life at Cambridge. Although "Trinity's loquacious Clock" told the hours with both "a male and female voice" (III, 54), and although the "long-back'd Chapel of King's College" reared his phallic pinnacles "above the dusky groves" (III, 4-5), Wordsworth prefers the image of a university as a society of scholars gathered like a "miscellaneous garland of wild flowers/Upon its matron temples (III, 226-227, italics mine), as a

Sanctuary for our Country's Youth,  
 With such a spirit in it as might be  
 Protection for itself, a Virgin grove,  
 Primaeval in its purity and depth . . . (III, 440-443,  
italics mine),



or as a "creek of the vast sea" (III, 625-626, italics mine). It is clear that his criticism of the traditional education represented by Cambridge, furthermore, stems from a youthful rebellion against the father imago, for he confesses that while the "Perennial minds which lie visibly entomb'd" (III, 346) may have "bred/A fervent love of rigorous discipline" in others (III, 348), it had no such effect on him (III, 349), the spoiled darling of Nature (III, 359). He did not love

the guise  
Of our scholastic studies; could have wish'd  
The river to have had an ampler range  
And freer pace . . . (III, 507-510, italics mine).

It is possible, too, that his delinquency in getting drunk and being late for Chapel (III, 294-328) was an unconscious gesture of rebellion against compulsory attendance at Chapel, of which he is so critical later in the same book (III, 415-425).

### III

At Cambridge, then, Wordsworth tends to cling to the Mother imago. Paradoxically his return to the Lake District for his first summer vacation constitutes the second phase of the myth, the "Departure."<sup>48</sup> Mythically speaking, transition into a new phase is a form of rebirth. The hero of The Prelude must return to the scene of his infancy: that is, he must re-enter the maternal realm in order to experience rebirth from it into a new level of consciousness. There is much in Book IV to support such an interpretation, for the opening passages are pervaded with maternal and feminine images: the Church which sits upon its hill "like a throned Lady" (IV, 14), the "old Dame, so motherly and good" (IV, 17), the "fair enchanting images" that rose up in his mind





"full-form'd, like Venus from the sea" when he was composing verse (IV, 102-105), the "river murmuring/And talking to itself" with which the poet compares himself (IV, 110-112), the "little Lake" of which he "made/Once more the circuit" (IV, 128-129). Even the "rough Terrier of the hills," the faithful companion of the young poet in his meditative wanderings through the countryside when he was "busy with the toil of verse" (IV, 103) is from a Jungian point of view "the symbolic representative of the unconscious, i.e., his own participation mystique with animal nature,"<sup>49</sup> or "the symbolic representative of the animal mother."<sup>50</sup> The erotic overtones of the following passage, furthermore are unmistakable:

Relating simply as my wish hath been  
 A Poet's history, can I leave untold  
 The joy with which I laid me down at night  
 In my accustomed bed, more welcome now  
 Perhaps, than if it had been more desir'd  
 Or been more often thought of with regret?  
 That bed whence I had heard the roaring wind  
 And clamorous rain, that bed where I, so oft,  
 Had lain awake, on breezy nights, to watch  
The moon in splendour couch'd among the leaves  
Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood,  
 Had watch'd her with fix'd eyes, while to and fro  
 In the dark summit of the moving Tree  
She rock'd with every impulse of the wind. (IV, 70-83,  
italics mine).

Following this accumulation of maternal and feminine imagery, in which again the tree figures prominently, the poet speaks of his soul's standing "Naked as in the presence of her God" (IV, 142). Whether the nakedness be that of the bride revealing herself to her beloved<sup>51</sup> or that of the babe newly emerged from the womb, it clearly points to a confrontation between masculine and feminine within the poet.

Even on the conscious level, however, the poet is aware in retrospect that an important psychological change took place during that



summer vacation, a kind of conversion, new beginning or rebirth. He has told the reader in Book III that until he descended into "the populous Plain" of Cambridge (III, 195) he had in his "own mind" remained "remote from human life,"

Even as a shepherd on a promontory,  
Who, lacking occupation, looks far forth  
Into the endless sea . . . (III, 544-549).

The first year at university and especially the subsequent summer at home constitute the beginning of the mythic sea-voyage or journey out. In his discussion of the symbolism of the sea-voyage in Romantic literature Auden says that he who identifies himself as a hero, that is, he who seeks his true identity, must abandon land-city-society for a perilous voyage on the life-giving waters of the sea.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, the "individuation process" in Jungian psychology "is often symbolized by a voyage of discovery to unknown lands."<sup>53</sup> Wordsworth calls himself a "Traveller" (III, 196), and implies that the journey's direction is inward, toward that centre "within our souls/Where all stand single" (III, 186-187). This passage inward is a theme worthy of "heroic argument":

Of Genius, Power,  
Creation and Divinity itself  
I have been speaking, for my theme has been  
What pass'd within me. Not of outward things  
Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,  
Symbols or actions; but of my own heart  
Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.  
O Heavens! how awful is the might of Souls,  
And what they do within themselves, while yet  
The yoke of earth is new to them, the world  
Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.  
This is, in truth, heroic argument,  
And genuine prowess; which I wish'd to touch  
With hand however weak; but in the main  
It lies far hidden from the reach of words. (III, 171-185).





The descent from the mountains of the Lake district into "the populous Plain" of Cambridge is "exquisitely fitted" to the pattern of the poet's inner development, for he is prepared by this first event of the mythic quest for the "rite de passage" that is to occur during the first vacation. Just as a knight errant embarking on a quest may ride some distance through the world as an on-looker at events before meeting with an adventure worthy of his prowess, Wordsworth passes through his first year at Cambridge like an uninvolved spectator at a "show" (III, 94 and 203), an "inferior exhibition" in a "theatre/For Wake or Fair" (III, 606-608), a "Tournament" (III, 618), a "pageant" (III, 620), a "spectacle" (III, 623), or a morality play:

For all Degrees  
 And Shapes of spurious fame and short-liv'd praise  
 Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms  
 Retainers won away from solid good;  
 And here was Labour, his own Bond-slave, Hope  
 That never set the pains against the prize,  
 Idleness, halting with his weary clog,  
 And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,  
 And simple Pleasure, foraging for Death,  
 Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;  
 Feuds, Factions, Flatteries, Enmity, and Guile;  
 Murmuring Submission, and bald Government;  
 The Idol weak as the Idolater;  
 And Decency and Custom starving Truth;  
 And blind Authority, beating with his Staff  
 The Child that might have led him, Emptiness  
 Followed, as of good omen; and meek Worth  
 Left to itself unheard of, and unknown. (III, 626-643).

The detachment of the spectator is suggested, too, by the dream quality of those first months away from home: "I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roam'd/Delighted, through the motley spectacle" (III, 28-29). Again in Book VIII, when for a second time he recalls those months, he says that he was "transported hence as in a dream" (VIII, 641). From this later more comprehensive perspective he is able consciously to





recognize the contrast between his state of mind at that time and what it subsequently became: "There came a time of greater dignity/Which had been gradually prepar'd . . . (VIII, 624-625). His loyalty to Nature and to "the poet's Soul," creating a tendency to withdraw from society and its institutions into those "caverns" within the mind which "sun/Could never penetrate" (III, 246-247) began to ripen into a commitment to human nature. His growing self-consciousness broadened its circumference to become consciousness of Man:

Then rose  
 Man, inwardly contemplated, and present  
 In my own being, to a loftier height;  
 As of all visible natures crown; and first  
 In capability of feeling what  
 Was to be felt; in being rapt away  
 By divine effect of power and love,  
 As, more than anything we know instinct  
 With Godhead, and by reason and by will  
 Acknowledging dependency sublime. (VIII, 631-640).

This phase of his development, however, did not reach fruition until, during his first visit home, he re-acquainted himself with those simple dignified human beings who for Wordsworth represent the best in humanity, the shepherds of his native district. The figure of the Shepherd looms above all the other figures in the work as a symbol of the whole man, for the typological connotations are unmistakable: he describes how a shepherd risked his life for a lost sheep (VIII, 222-311); how as a schoolboy he had "felt his presence in his own domain,/As of a Lord and Master; or a Power/Or Genius, under Nature, under God,/Presiding . . ." (VIII, 393-395); and how

His Form hath flash'd upon me, glorified  
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:  
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,  
 A solitary object and sublime,  
 Above all height! like an aerial Cross,



As it is stationed on some spiry Rock  
Of the Chartreuse, for worship. (VIII, 404-410).

The symbol of the cross on the cathedral has special force both because of its Christian associations and because it recalls the cathedral metaphor that Wordsworth used to describe his projected magnum opus. The Shepherd in this context suggests Christ, for whom the poet is building a new cathedral.

The poet's rediscovery of this mythical being of his childhood paradise initiates him into a "love and reverence/Of human Nature" (VIII, 413-414). Returning from Cambridge and encountering the figure from a new perspective he experiences "A freshness . . ./In human Life" (IV, 181-182). "With another eye" he sees the "Woodman in the Woods,/ The Shepherd on the Hills" (IV, 205-207). He speaks of the "dawning" of "human-heartedness" (IV, 224-225), and of a "new-born feeling" (IV, 233). At the same time that the existence of a humanity beyond himself emerges into consciousness his growing self-consciousness is becoming an increasing burden to him:

The very garments that I wore appear'd  
To prey upon my strength, and stopped the course  
And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness. (IV, 292-294).

In mythopoeic terms, the experience being described is a rite de passage into moral responsibility, which is not to be confused with the imaginative creative love which unites the individual to humanity in the final phase of the myth. Now he is merely a "moral agent" (VIII, 668), who thinks that by "acting well/And understanding" he will learn to love (VIII, 675-676).





Wordsworth's account of that first summer of his university career is, characteristically for the poet, only apparently, and therefore deceptively literal. It contains all the elements of that phase of the monomyth, "The Departure," which Campbell divides into "The Call to Adventure" and "The Crossing of the First Threshold." While returning home at dawn from a village dance, the poet undergoes an experience, his account of which, when combined with the immediately ensuing passage about the meeting with the Old Soldier, constitutes the mythic "Call to Adventure." After passing the night in "dancing, gaiety and mirth" (IV, 320), the poet makes his way home just as the cock crows:

Magnificent  
 The morning was, a memorable pomp,  
 More glorious than I ever had beheld.  
 The Sea was laughing at a distance; all  
 The solid Mountains were as bright as clouds,  
 Grain-tinctured, drench'd in empyrean light;  
 And, in the meadows and the lower grounds,  
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,  
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,  
 And Labourers going forth into the fields.  
 --Ah! need I say dear Friend, that to the brim  
 My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows  
 Were then made for me; bond unknown to me  
 Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,  
 A dedicated Spirit. On I walk'd  
 In blessedness, which even yet remains. (IV, 330-345).

The parallel between what appears to be merely a biographically factual account of a youthful experience and Campbell's description of the nature of the first stage of the mythic journey is indeed remarkable:

It may sound the call to some high historical undertaking. Or it may mark the dawn of religious illumination. As apprehended by the mystic, it marks what has been termed "the awakening of the self." . . . whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration--a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.<sup>54</sup>



This experience comes to Wordsworth, as it came to Gautama Sakyamuni (whose legend Campbell cites as the "most celebrated example of the call to adventure in the literature of the world."<sup>55</sup>), after indulgence in the worldly pleasures of a social gathering, the village dance. The "vows" that are "made" for the poet signify that destiny has "transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown."<sup>56</sup>

Still another parallel with the legend of the Buddha is that the call to adventure is accompanied by the mysterious appearance of a figure whose age, experience, and indifference to this world make him the polar opposite of a youth on the "threshold" of life: "a decrepit old man, broken-toothed, gray-haired, crooked and bent of body, leaning on a staff," who has "retired from the world," and whose function is to remind the Buddha that "old age must come" and that his destiny, too, is to relinquish the world and its trivial pleasures.<sup>57</sup> The summer when Wordsworth became "a dedicated Spirit" is the same summer in which he met the Old Soldier, who bore himself with an "air of mild indifference" (IV, 444) and whose sole worldly possession was the faded military garb he wore. The circumstances of his appearance, furthermore, intimate a transcendental significance. The poet was wandering along a public road by moonlight, when

It chanc'd a sudden turning of the road  
Presented to my view an uncouth shape  
. . . . .  
He was of stature tall,  
A foot above man's common measure tall,  
Stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean,  
A man more meagre, as it seem'd to me,  
Was never seen abroad by night or day.  
His arms were long, and bare his hands; his mouth  
Shew'd ghastly in the moonlight: from behind





A milestone propp'd him, and his figure seem'd  
 Half-sitting, and half-standing. I could mark  
 That he was clad in military garb,  
 Though faded, yet entire. He was alone,  
 Had no attendant, neither Dog, nor Staff,  
 Nor knapsack; in his very dress appear'd  
 A desolation, a simplicity  
 That seem'd akin to solitude. (IV, 401-419).<sup>58</sup>

Wordsworth failed to observe, until the Old Soldier stood up to accompany the poet, that he did in fact have a staff (like the old man in the legend of the Buddha), and then he is described as a "ghastly figure moving at my side" (IV, 459-468). Contrary to his usual manner Wordsworth says nothing about the way the experience affected him, only that upon parting from the Old Soldier he "sought with quiet heart my distant home" (IV, 504), but his very silence on the matter intensifies the mythic aura.

The Old Soldier is only one of a series of mythic figures which appear in Book IV in the guise of real people remembered from Wordsworth's youth, for in crossing the first threshold the hero, true to the monomyth, is aided by a series of supernatural helpers.<sup>59</sup> In responding to the call, "the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task,"<sup>60</sup> but "not infrequently the supernatural helper is masculine in form," for example, "a ferryman,"<sup>61</sup> whose task is to conduct the soul into the realm of the unconscious. It is not surprising, then, that an "old Ferryman" (IV, 7) conducted Wordsworth across Lake Windermere to "that sweet Valley" (IV, 11) where he was reared and in which he was to experience the rebirth which I have discussed. A few lines later in this opening passage of Book IV the poet mentions "my old Dame, so motherly and good" (IV, 17). She is the archetypal "little old crone," "a grandmotherly little dame who lives underground," "the helpful crone and fairy godmother," who represents





"the benign, protecting power of destiny."<sup>62</sup> "The helpful 'old woman'," says Jolande Jacobi, a Jungian analyst, "is a well-known symbol in myths and fairy tales for the wisdom of the eternal female nature."<sup>63</sup> Campbell reminds us that in Christian legends this role is often played by the Virgin.<sup>64</sup> Even she is present in the crucial passage under discussion, as "the snow-white Church upon its hill," which sits "like a throned Lady, sending out/A gracious look all over its domain" (IV, 13-15).

Another figure, whose significance I have already discussed in a different context, demands further attention here. Wordsworth devotes thirty seven lines (IV, 84-120) to a description of the nature and behaviour of a "rough Terrier of the hills" who accompanied him on his rambles. Coming as it does in close juxtaposition with the other mythic figures we have just observed, Wordsworth's dog could be one of those "helpful animals" of fairytale and legend<sup>65</sup> who appear when the hero is about to enter a new phase of his career, and who "represent the stirrings or intuitions of the unconscious."<sup>66</sup> The appearance of an animal at the beginning of the perilous journey is a warning that the quest can be fulfilled only if the hero trusts the forces of his own instinctual nature.

#### IV

Equipped with both supernatural and natural aid, the hero of The Prelude has arrived at the threshold of a series of adventures by means of which he will win his own soul. The first of these is a regenerative journey to the underworld, "the kingdom of the dark,"<sup>67</sup> some hidden enclosed place from which he must win his way to freedom and



light, like the infant emerging from the womb. For Wordsworth the journey through the Alps by way of the Simplon Pass constitutes this part of the myth.

Hardly a single critic has failed to note, first, that this was a profound experience for the poet, its importance far surpassing the biographical fact celebrated in italics, "we had crossed the Alps" (VI, 524); secondly, that he recognizes its importance only in retrospect, fourteen years after the event; and thirdly, that what he feels about the experience in retrospect has something to do with imagination and the creative process. No critic, however, has offered a satisfactory explanation as to why, in connection with this particular empirical event, the poet should speak of "Apocalypse" and of "types and symbols of Eternity" (VI, 570-571).

Depth-psychology offers a possible explanation. It is the nature of the a priori contents of the unconscious to seek conscious recognition. This is the aspect of the creative process to which Jung gives the term "transcendent function." The archetype, which he is careful to distinguish from the archetypal image, is perpetually seeking to establish a dialectic with the conscious mind through the medium of image, which it either throws up spontaneously from the contents of racial memory, or seizes upon in the raw material of empirical experience. Since Wordsworth tended to turn his imagination outward, the images inevitably came from the external world. The Simplon Pass is an impressive example of this phenomenon, a mountain pass being, according to Jungian psychoanalyst, Jolande Jacobi, "A well known symbol for a 'situation of transition' that leads from an old attitude of mind to a





new one."<sup>68</sup> We can speculate, therefore, that had Wordsworth not been a poet and had he never been near a mountain pass, the same symbolic formation might have occurred in dream or fantasy. Or had he been a different kind of poet, one who did not bind himself to empirical experience, he might have invented a similar situation to serve the same symbolic purpose. The mark of Wordsworth's genius, however, is that he shows the immanence of myth in empirical experience.

The textual evidence provided by his description of the Simplon Pass episode supports the view that it is an archetypal experience. First, the poet refers to himself and Robert Jones, his companion, as "two brother Pilgrims" (VI, 478). Second, like Dante at the beginning of The Divine Comedy, or the Red Crosse Knight in the opening canto of The Faerie Queene, Wordsworth and his brother pilgrim lose their way. By the time they find their bearings with the help of a Peasant, they discover that they have already crossed the Alps. The fact that Wordsworth italicizes the discovery, combined with the metaphysical passage following it in which he tries to convey something of the spiritual impact that the memory of the experience has upon him suggests, indeed, that next to the ascent of Snowdon the Simplon Pass episode is the one which most powerfully manifested the eternal or archetypal forms looming behind empirical phenomena. Indeed the impact is so powerful that it arrests the "progress of his Song" (VI, 526) and inspires a hymn to the Imagination, that "Power" in which he seemed at the time "lost as in a cloud" (VI, 539) and which impeded his empirical progress then in the journey, as he is impeded in the progress of the account of the experience now by the "unfather'd vapour" (VI, 527) which rises before him. In both cases he is crossing a "threshold" from the "visible" to the "invisible," and in



both cases is accompanied, again as in the initiation experience in Book IV, by a Supernatural Helper, this time his Muse, the Imagination.

The next stage of the myth is the descent or "fall" into the perilous kingdom of "experience," the entry into the womb-tomb of life-in-death:<sup>69</sup>

downwards we hurried fast,  
And enter'd with the road which we had miss'd  
Into a narrow chasm; the brook and road  
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,  
And with them did we journey several hours  
At slow step. The immeasurable height  
Of woods decaying, never to be decay'd,  
The stationary blasts of water-falls,  
And everywhere along the hollow rent  
Winds thwarting winds, bewilder'd and forlorn,  
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,  
The rocks that mutter'd close upon our ears,  
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side  
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
The unfetter'd clouds, and region of the Heavens,  
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light  
Were like the workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,  
Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
The types and symbols of Eternity,  
Of first and last, and midst, and without end. (VI,  
551-572).

This passage is rich in archetypal imagery suggesting the nature of human experience, as dynamic process like "the raving stream," as a dialectic between polarities like "tumult and peace," or "darkness and light," as an organic unfolding like that of the "blossoms upon one tree," and as an open-ended structure suggested by the last line, "Of first and last, and midst, and without end."

It has not been sufficiently emphasized, if indeed noticed, furthermore, that this passage embodies both the "forest wilderness" motif, as the "woods decaying, never to be decayed" (VI, 557), and the





associated "sacred tree" motif which we have observed earlier in The Prelude and which reappears here as the tree of the Apocalypse (VI, 569-570). In discussing "the ideal landscape" in classical literature Ernst Curtius observes that a forest is "the way to the other world," as in the Aeneid and The Divine Comedy, and reminds us that as one of the conditions of entrance into the underworld, Aeneas, for example, had to "break the golden bough that grows on the sacred tree in the midst of a close grove set in a shadowy valley. . . ." <sup>70</sup> The archetypal symbols I have italicized, or versions thereof, are all present in Wordsworth's account of the Simplon Pass experience.

The hero is now on "The Road of Trials," which takes him through "a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials," <sup>71</sup> or on that "perilous journey into the darkness . . . into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth." <sup>72</sup> Campbell's description of "the favourite phase of the myth adventure" <sup>73</sup> applies with a marked degree of accuracy to that phase of his life which Wordsworth enters after "Cambridge and the Alps." "Residence in London" represents a series of worldly temptations or ordeals through which the hero must pass in order to fulfil his destiny. Wordsworth's encounter with London, a place of "foolishness and madness in parade" (VII, 588), recalls Christian's encounter with Vanity Fair. Indeed, it is the fair "named of Saint Bartholomew" (VII, 651) which Wordsworth chooses as "a type not false/Of what the mighty city is itself" (VII, 695-696), and his description of it evokes both Babylon and the Inferno:

what a hell  
For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din  
Barbarian and infernal! 'tis a dream,  
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound. (VII,  
658-661).





The women of London, furthermore, in contrast with the Maid of Buttermere (VII, 320-345)--whose name is Mary!--evoke "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations" in Revelation (17:5): for example, the mother with the painted cheeks at the theatre (VII, 372), or the prostitute "to open shame/Abandon'd and the pride of public vice" (VII, 418-419). Babylon, again, as the city of captivity, is evoked by the poet's reference in Book I to having been released from bondage, "from yon City's walls set free" (I, 7).<sup>74</sup>

That the years in London belong to the kingdom of darkness into which Wordsworth entered through the Simplon Pass is established irrefutably by his later description of those years in Book VIII where he integrates into a mythic whole all that he has experienced thus far. He explicitly draws an analogy between his entry into London and the entry of a traveller, through "mountain tracts" (VII, 714), into a "Vault," "Den" or "Grotto" (VIII, 712-714). He refers to the experience, furthermore, as the passing of a "threshold" (VIII, 700). Here we have a forceful example of the "human metaphor," the establishing of an identity between empirical experience and archetype, for Wordsworth's London, experienced in space and time through the senses of a single individual is that "dream city" into which the hero of the monomyth "can enter only after a kind of initiation."<sup>75</sup>

Books IX, X and XI, those dealing with Wordsworth's involvement in the French Revolution and his recovery from the disillusionment it produced, take the hero to "the nadir of the mythological round where he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward."<sup>76</sup> The experience of "Imagination Impaired," or in terms of Christian mythology, "the fall," is, the poet recognizes in retrospect, the result of a naive reliance on



man's rational faculty, not "the grand/And simple Reason," but that "humbler power" which works "By logic and minute analysis" and which "Is of all Idols that which pleases most/The growing mind" (XI, 123-126). Intellectualism was, for Wordsworth, the dragon that had to be slain,<sup>77</sup> the beast that lured him into the "labyrinth" (X, 923) of intellectual and moral confusion:

now believing,  
Now disbelieving, endlessly perplex'd  
With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground  
Of moral obligation, what the rule  
And what the sanction, till, demanding proof  
And seeking it in everything, I lost  
All feeling of conviction . . . (X, 893-899).

When Wordsworth went to France in 1791, "after the first storm was overblown" (IX, 108), he was full of youthful conviction and naive optimism. He "approached, like other Youth, the Shield/Of human nature from the golden side" (X, 663-664), and his optimism found "a living confirmation" (IX, 389) "in a People risen up/Fresh as the morning Star" (IX, 390-391). He and his republican friend, Beaupuis, would "ruminate with interchange of talk/On rational liberty and hope in Man,/Justice and peace" (400-403). They "believed/Devoutly that a spirit was abroad" (519-520) that would bring "better days/To all mankind" (X, 532-533), but England's betrayal of the republican cause combined with the atrocities committed in France by those "who throned/The human understanding paramount/And made of that their God" (X, 318-320) quickly brought a disillusionment well-nigh despair:

Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!  
Were my day-thoughts, my dreams were miserable;  
Through months, through years, long after the last beat  
Of those atrocities (I speak bare truth,  
As if to thee alone in private talk)  
I scarcely had one night of quiet sleep





Such ghastly visions had I of despair  
 And tyranny, and implements of death,  
 And long orations which in dreams I pleaded  
 Before just Tribunals, with a voice  
 Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,  
 Of treachery and desertion in the place  
 The holiest that I knew of, my own soul. (X, 369-381).

This is surely the poet's "dark night of the soul," or "the night-sea journey" of Jungian depth-psychology. The archetypal overtones of a phrase from an earlier passage describing the same psychological crisis, "blasts/From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven" (X, 314-315), continue to reverberate in the passage quoted above, suggesting the archetypal journey through the Inferno.

In the monomythic pattern it is often during the passage through the underworld that the archetypal "Meeting with the Goddess" occurs. "This is the crisis at the nadir, the zenith, or at the uttermost edge of the earth, at the central point of the cosmos, in the tabernacle of the temple, or within the darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart."<sup>78</sup> In Wordsworth's own phrase, it is the "great consummation" between the "individual Mind" and the soul of the universe ("Prospectus," 58-63). Yet on the literal level this climactic event is apparently absent from Wordsworth's myth, indeed so conspicuously absent that even did we not have access to biographical information about his affair with Annette Vallon we might well wonder, "realizing how much his genius was dependent for all its greatest manifestations upon actual personal experience,"<sup>79</sup> what from his own experience is veiled beneath the tale of Vaudracour and Julia. To assume, however, that, for certain practical reasons which DeSélincourt explains in his Notes,<sup>80</sup> Wordsworth could not allude directly to his love affair and therefore chose to present it obliquely



as a tale "related by my patriot Friend" (IX, 553) is an oversimplification, not consistent with the complex and ambiguous nature of the work's mythic structure.

Mythically speaking, Julia is the culmination of all the feminine influences which Wordsworth had encountered up to that point in his life. "It is evident," says DeSelincourt, "from the amount of revision that Vaudracour and Julia underwent before its publication in 1820 that Wordsworth was deeply affected by it."<sup>81</sup> Indeed he would be, for the heroine of the tale integrates the roles of mother, sister, and mistress: She is the mother the poet lost as a child, for Vaudracour would often be seen:

Propping a pale and melancholy face  
Upon the Mother's bosom, resting thus  
His head upon one breast, while from the other  
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food. (IX, 811-814).

She is Dorothy, the sister the poet romped with as a child:

From their cradles up,  
With but a step between their several homes  
The pair had thriven together year by year,  
Friends, Playmates, Twins in pleasure, after strife  
And petty quarrels had grown fond again,  
Each other's advocate, each other's help,  
Nor ever happy if they were apart. . . (IX, 569-575).

And she is the "temptress" or "forbidden mother" who is "a lure to dangerous desire,"<sup>82</sup> for Vaudracour, like Wordsworth in his relationship with Annette Vallon, "Was inwardly prepared to turn aside/From laws and custom, and entrust himself/To Nature . . . (IX, 601-603).

The figure of Julia, however, as mother-sister-temptress, is an incomplete symbol of the "anima" or "Queen Goddess of the World" with whom the hieros gamos is consummated in the great central adventure which



opens "the road to the light beyond the dark walls of our living death."<sup>83</sup> The goal of the hero's quest, his reward for surviving its ordeals, is the anima as virgin bride. Even in the Apocalypse, Jung reminds us, she is the culmination of the author's "eschatological expectations."<sup>84</sup> In Blake's myth the bride is Jerusalem; in Shelley's it is Asia. In Wordsworth's myth we know only that the great consummation with the feminine principle in himself and in the universe occurs on the top of Mount Snowdon. The Snowdon passage is a synthesis of the feminine symbols that we have encountered with strengthening cumulative effect throughout the work, and the poet himself tells us that he has "track'd the main essential Power,/Imagination, up her way sublime" (XII, 289-290).

## V

Since the ascent of Snowdon is "the great central adventure" of Wordsworth's myth, the symbolism of the passage must be examined in some detail.

The predominant natural image in The Prelude is the mountain. Like most of Wordsworth's imagery it is a personal symbol deeply rooted in the poet's immediate, sensuous, concrete experience, and a transpersonal one laden with religious and artistic associations dating back to the dawn of history. On the personal level he is very much aware of the debt he owes as a poet to the geographical influence of his formative years among the mountains of the Lake District:

Yet were I grossly destitute of all  
Those human sentiments which make this earth  
So dear, if I should fail, with grateful voice  
To speak of you, Ye Mountains and Ye Lakes;  
And sounding Cataracts! Ye Mists and Winds  
That dwell among the hills where I was born. (II, 437-442).





The "spots of time" connected with mountains, furthermore, give the symbol, when it appears in the final book, a special power. The childhood experiences remembered by the poet always find the child dwarfed by the gigantic and sublime forms around him, as in the stolen skiff episode discussed in Chapter V, and again in the skating episode, in which the cliffs encircling the frozen lake wheel around the dizzy skater as if they had a life of their own (I, 482-486). By contrast, in the Snowdon experience the poet ascends to meet "the unknown modes of being" (I, 420) manifested through Nature, in the dynamic reciprocity of the "great consummation."<sup>85</sup>

For a full discussion of the mountain as a typological symbol one can turn to Eliade, or Campbell,<sup>86</sup> or to Jacobi, who reminds us that in many mythological tales, "a mountain often symbolizes a place of revelation, where transformation and change may take place,"<sup>87</sup> but for any reader nurtured in the Hellenic-Judaic-Christian tradition the symbol has countless immediate associations, of which Olympus, Sinai, and Calvary are perhaps the most obvious. In the Snowdon passage the symbol carries the cumulative effect of these associations as well as those personal ones which date back to the poet's childhood. Through these associations a particular mountain is transformed into the "cosmic Mountain" upon which the Transfiguration takes place, or is "the point of epiphany at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment. . . ."<sup>88</sup> The structural placing of the Snowdon experience as the climax of the poem, as well as the poet's comments on the meaning the experience held for him, suggest that it is a type of the Transfiguration. According to Campbell the transfiguration is the event by which the hero is revealed as standing on the threshold



of two worlds, the invisible and enduring one into which he has journeyed on his perilous quest, and the transient and visible one to which he returns bringing a boon for his people:

The myths do not often display in a single image the mystery of the ready transit. Where they do, the moment is a precious symbol, full of import, to be treasured and contemplated. Such a moment was that of the Transfiguration of the Christ.

"Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. . . ."

Here is the whole myth in a moment; Jesus the guide, the way, the vision, and the companion of the return.<sup>89</sup>

Wordsworth, too, leads his companions up the Cosmic Mountain, "the foremost of the Band" (XIII, 34). He is simultaneously the master who undergoes the transfiguration, or transformation, and the disciple who records the event. His subsequent commentary on "the Mighty mind" that

feeds upon infinity  
That is exalted by an underpresence,  
The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim  
Or vast in its own being . . . (XIII, 69-73).

identifies the experience he has undergone as one in which he has become aware of himself as Cosmic Man, the embodiment and symbol of the Love which "cannot be/Without Imagination" (XIII, 166-167) for "they are each in each, and cannot stand/Dividually" (XIII, 186-187).

The blue chasm of the Snowdon passage is the culmination of the pattern of cave or cavern imagery which runs through the work, and the symbol which links the deep recesses of the poet's early imagination with the climactic moment of vision. Psychologically the cave is the maternal womb; mythopoeically for Wordsworth it is the dark mysterious source of the imagination:

we have traced the stream  
From darkness, and the very place of birth





In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard  
The sound of waters . . . (XIII, 166-175).

From either view the symbol suggests the depth and darkness of the place where "sun/Could never penetrate" (III, 246-247), as opposed to the height and light symbolized by the summit of a mountain. The juxtaposition of the two symbols in the Snowdon passage signifies that the polarities created by the fallen or "split" intellect have achieved a synthesis or that "mighty unity/In all which we behold and feel, and are" (XIII, 245-255).

A second consideration is that a chasm is itself a fissure or a "split." Some of the meaning of the image is related to the stone<sup>90</sup> that the alienated adult found split when he returned to the scene of his childhood (II, 33-47). It is again no accident, furthermore, that immediately following this passage we have an account of an event involving the discovery of a hermit's cave (II, 56-78), an age-old symbol of the solitary contemplative life, of the sage who withdraws from the world in a regenerative "Return" to the womb-tomb to find the kingdom of God within.

The third major image in the Snowdon passage is the water that rushes through the chasm. The typological significance of this symbol hardly needs further comment. All of the leading scholars of myth, whether psychological or religious in their emphasis, have made extensive studies of the "universally diffused symbolism of water,"<sup>91</sup> which is "known to all systems of mythological imagery."<sup>92</sup> Kenneth MacLean has devoted an article to a discussion of the various forms which the symbol takes in The Prelude, from the River Derwent of the poet's childhood to the sea glimpsed beyond the mist surrounding Mount Snowdon, and concludes:

Wordsworth found peculiar significance in the element of water. So frequently an exciting water image is made climactic or final, we must



suppose that he found in the many forms of water highest aesthetic beauty. More than this, he betrays a conscious appreciation of the symbolic significance of water, finding in this element a symbol for man's mind and its varied powers.<sup>93</sup>

At the climactic "spot of time" the "ceaseless music" of the River Derwent (I, 279) becomes "the roar of waters, torrents, streams/  
Innumerable, roaring with one voice," and

in that breach  
Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,  
That dark deep thoroughfare had Nature lodg'd  
The Soul, the Imagination of the whole. (XIII, 62-65).

Of the various forms in which the water image appears, the sea is of special importance in the Snowdon passage, where it is both the metaphorical sea of mist resting at the poet's feet, and "the real Sea" (XIII, 49) which lies beneath the mist. The climb, beginning at sea level, takes the climber through the second sea, the sea of mist, to a clarity of vision that enables him to see beyond the mist.

The symbolism of the mist demands careful consideration. It is drawn to our attention three times in the passage. Before the ascent begins it is a thick, oppressive, dripping mist "that covered all the sky,/Half threatening storm and rain" (XIII, 11-12). This is surely the mist of polarity and paradox through which we have followed the poet in the first twelve books, the mist created by the evaporation of the life-giving waters of the sea, and blinding the psychic vision until the questing soul finds the grace to transcend it. It is the mist of intellectual confusion, doubt and disillusionment that characterized the years at Cambridge, London, Blois and Orleans, out of which there arose, immediately preceding the Snowdon episode, "sight/Of a new world" (XII, 371-372). The light that finally penetrates the mist is not that of the





sun, the traditional symbolic source of spiritual light, but--and it is appropriate to Wordsworth's conception of the poet's function--that of the moon, typologically a symbol of the maternal and feminine. And since it provides the light by means of which the poet experiences his climactic transfiguration, his encounter with the image here is a version of the hieros gamos, the union of the hero with his Lady Soul, or, in psychological terms, of masculine ego consciousness with anima. As a child the poet responded to the sun and moon equally, to the sun because it represented the active and vital principle in the universe (II, 181-202). Now in maturity it is appropriately the moon which predominates, serenely absorbing and reflecting the primal source of light and energy.

Undoubtedly, whether consciously to Wordsworth or not, the moon here represents the soul of the poet, who does not create his own light but acts as a medium through which divine light reaches the world in the night of its mortality. The symbol, therefore, provides an artistic resolution of the paradox of the active and passive in the creative process.

Another paradox that troubled Wordsworth throughout his life and that is resolved in the Snowdon episode is the salvation of individuality within the human community. The child of the first two books was a solitary figure even in the company of his playmates, as in the skating episode; and this need to escape "the tumultuous throng" (I, 476) continued throughout the poet's life. "The self-sufficing power of solitude" (II, 78) was almost as dangerous a temptation as the heart that "Was social, and lov'd idleness and joy" (III, 236), for the one might weaken the human bond and deafen him to "The still sad music of humanity" ("Tintern Abbey," 91), while the other might numb the imagination, as it did during the first year at Cambridge (III, 260). Before Snowdon, however, there





are a number of integrating images which prepare us for the resolution of the paradox in the climactic passage, where each of the climbers, although an integral part of the group, withdraws "into commerce with his private thoughts" (XIII, 19). Of the many examples to be found I mention three: first, the village dance during his first vacation from Cambridge, in which he participates while maintaining the link with the private world represented by the sea and the mountains, in whose beauty he indulged on his walk home (IV, 316-345); second, the country fair, the sounds of which reached the summit of "solitary" Mount Helvellyn (VIII, 1-61); and third, the public road described in Book XII, on which the poet travels alone but encounters other travellers (XII, 145-184).

There remains to be considered the shepherd's cur that chased the hedgehog, sending up "a barking turbulent" (XIII, 24). This image has two retrospective echoes. It calls to mind the dog that accompanied the poet on his wanderings through the lake district in his youth (see above p. 115), and also evokes the image of the noble, independent shepherd figure to which a large section of Book VIII is devoted. Hence the dog of the Snowdon passage, who belongs to a shepherd, provides the integrating link not only between youth and the ultimate confrontation with the Self reached at the "eminence" of maturity, but between the dark primordial realm of animal instinct and the spiritual ideal symbolized by the Christ-like figure of the sublime Shepherd.

## VI

The final stage of the myth is "The Return":

When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal,



personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds.<sup>94</sup>

In the opening passage of The Prelude the poet tells us that he has returned from "the tiresome sea" to "dwell on shore" where he will dedicate himself to "chosen tasks" in a "holy life of music and of verse" (I, 54), and in the penultimate book he says that he loves "a public road" (XII, 145) with its "disappearing line" (XII, 148) which seemed like "a guide into eternity" (XII, 151), and that the "Wanderers of the Earth" (XIII, 156) who travel this road are invested with "something of the grandeur" of the "Mariner who sails the roaring sea" (XII, 153-154). Wordsworth himself, in his own empirical existence, is the incarnation of the archetype of "The Ancient Mariner," the mythic figure created by the poet to whom Wordsworth addresses his own autobiographical myth and to whose understanding he appeals. The poet of The Prelude, like the hero of his friend's ballad, has been "Alone, alone, all, all alone/  
Alone on a wide wide sea!" ("The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 232-233). He, too, has been both active participant in and passive victim of the cosmic power manifested in natural and supernatural phenomena; he too has encountered the Night-mare Life-in-Death, the agony of guilt and alienation, but he, too, has found grace in a moonlight vision of sea and land, as the Ancient Mariner did at the end of his ordeal (473-480), and like him he is compelled, on his return to his native country, by "strange power of speech" to "teach his tale." The ultimate glory of the poet is not his lonely vision, but his return from vision to the human community with the elixir that will regenerate it.





### PART THREE: SHELLEY



## CHAPTER VII

### THE HERO AS REBEL

#### I

If the central event in the career of the hero in Wordsworth's myth is the "great marriage," in Shelley's it is "atonement with the father."<sup>1</sup> Shelley's "psycho-evolutionary"<sup>2</sup> task, in his roles both as private individual and as universal man, was to come to terms with "authority." This may seem an ironic appraisal of the archetypal rebel of the Romantic period, the poet with whom "the antinomian spirit reaches its height in English literature,"<sup>3</sup> whose whole life, "in every act and expression of it, challenged the beliefs and the usages of the society into which he was born,"<sup>4</sup> but Shelley never seriously doubted, despite his heresy, the existence of a final authority, "some vast intellect [that] animates Infinity,"<sup>5</sup> that would perhaps "derive happiness from [his] exertions."<sup>6</sup>

That authority, however, had to be identical with his own will, for it was temperamentally impossible for him to accept as just "anything that obstructed the free exercise of his will."<sup>7</sup> The most "human thing" about Shelley, says Brinton, is that he would "both eat his cake and have it. Like Rousseau, he would at once be free and submissive to authority."<sup>8</sup> Shelley was not daunted by the paradox. In his own version of the Godwinian doctrine of Necessity he found its ultimate resolution, for since Necessity, as the "mother of the world" (Queen Mab, VI, 198), is the origin of one's own nature one has only to be true to oneself in order to carry out the divine will. If he "never set on his own affective



impulses, on his own emotional and physical expansion, the limits that the average citizen of romantic inclinations sets on his," or if "he could never centre his emotions in a corporate loyalty that automatically controlled them,"<sup>9</sup> the reason was that his loyalty to the divinity within, in which he had implicit trust, precluded "corporate loyalty." His trust in the identity between his own will and the will of the divine law of Necessity made it inevitable that he would clash with the established order, with the "set-fast,"<sup>10</sup> for the law of Necessity is the law of change, and the rebel as an agent of Necessity is the carrier of change, the destroyer of the old and the harbinger of the new. "Change" was for Shelley, furthermore, synonymous with "progressive improvement."<sup>11</sup> The "main inspirational force of Shelley's work," says Cameron, ". . . is his theory of historical evolution."<sup>12</sup> At the age of eighteen he said, "I am convinced that equality will be the attendant on a more advanced & ameliorated state of society,"<sup>13</sup> and he never lost sight of that ideal. History, he believed, consists in a struggle between, on the one hand, the forces of equality and liberty, and on the other, the forces of despotism, but ultimately the forces of freedom will triumph, because "we were not destined for misery."<sup>14</sup>

Shelley's faith that good would triumph over evil was characteristically Romantic in that it sprang not from empirical or historical evidence but from insight or intuition. While Cameron argues that his views "were the result of an analysis of the contemporary international situation, the product of a mind shaped by the forces of the French Revolution and the English reform movement,"<sup>15</sup> the social conditions left in the wake of the Revolution were not likely to inspire faith in the "amelioration of society." Shelley, however, could see





beyond empirical evidence. He was, as Santayana calls him, one of "the spokesmen of the a priori," one of those beings who, "Endowed with a specific, unshakeable, faith . . . are impervious to experience: and as they burst the womb they bring ready-made with them their final and only possible system of philosophy."<sup>16</sup> Studies of the juvenilia, including Cameron's own Introduction to the Esdaile Notebook, support the a priori theory of Shelley's ideas, for the essential antinomianism and the faith in the ultimate triumph of the spirit of freedom are apparent from his "first beginnings"<sup>17</sup> as a poet. In "To the Republicans of North America" we find, for example, these lines:

Shout aloud! let every slave  
 Crouching at corruption's throne  
 Start into a man, and brave  
 Racks and chains without a groan!  
 Let the castle's heartless glow  
 And the hovel's vice and woe  
 Fade like gaudy flowers that blow,  
 Weeds that peep and then are gone,  
 Whilst from misery's ashes risen  
 Love shall burst the Captive's prison. (11-20)

and in an even earlier poem "To Liberty," the germs of the Prometheus-Jupiter relationship are already present:

Say, can the Tyrant's frown  
 Daunt those who fear not  
 Or break the spirits down  
 His badge that wear not?  
 Can chains or death or infamy subdue  
 The free and fearless soul  
 That dreads not their control,  
 Sees Paradise and Hell,  
 Sees the Palace and the cell,  
 Yet bravely dares prefer the good and true? (11-20).

"It is a strange matter, alluring, uncertain," says Weaver, ". . . there seem to be hints of the Jupiter-Prometheus relationship (Timothy-Percy?) in the earliest of Shelley's verses."<sup>18</sup> Weaver has in mind especially



"The Wandering Jew" and "A Dialogue" of 1809, but in all of the juvenilia which touch on social issues there is the same obsession with the victim-tyrant relationship. It is wrong, furthermore, concedes Cameron, "to regard this early period as one of ideological radicalism from which he later recovered. The views on society, politics, religion, and sex that he developed during these years really changed very little."<sup>19</sup>

Shelley the poet and Shelley the radical social reformer, furthermore, cannot be separated, for Shelley is explicit about his own sense of being "called" by history, or Providence, or what he termed "Necessity," to perform an important mission, and this conviction is related to his awareness of having arrived on the historical scene at a turning point or crisis in European history, of standing on the brink of a great cataclysmic change, some political and moral miracle which would create heaven on earth. That "haunting sense of crisis, that mystic belief in a wonder-working catastrophe to follow on the generous contagion of his ideals, that fills so much of his poetry"<sup>20</sup> is evident in "The Crisis," one of his earliest poems

Then may we hope the consummating hour  
Dreadfully, sweetly, swiftly is arriving,  
When light from Darkness, peace from desolation,  
Bursts unresisted . . . .(13-16)<sup>21</sup>

and appears again a decade later in A Philosophic View of Reform:

". . . England, the particular object for the sake of which these general considerations have been stated on the present occasion, has arrived, like the nations which surround it, at a crisis in its destiny."<sup>22</sup> In the same work he defines the function of poetry in this crisis, and expresses his conviction that the poet is the agent of the spirit of





change which is abroad in his age:

. . . the most unfailing herald, or companion, or follower, of an universal employment of the sentiments of a nation to the production of a beneficial change is poetry, meaning by poetry an intense and impassioned power of communicating intense and impassioned impressions respecting man and nature.<sup>23</sup>

He goes on to explain the distinction, so central in my own argument, between the poet in his transpersonal capacity as the hero embodying "the spirit of his age"<sup>24</sup> and the poet in his personal capacity in which he may appear to be the antithesis of conventional notions of morality:

The persons in whom this power takes its abode may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little correspondence with the spirit of good of which it is the minister. But although they may deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve that which is seated on the throne of their own soul.<sup>25</sup>

They are "compelled to serve that which is seated on the throne of their own soul." This is the key to the paradox of Shelley's antinomianism, for that which is seated on the throne of his soul is the imago of the father-king, with whom the hero, in the final stage of his spiritual progress achieves "atonement" in its etymological sense of "at-one-ment," or "identity." At this stage the apparent opposition between the hero's will and the will of an objective "other" reveals itself as an illusion. The hatred of tyranny is recognized as the tyranny of hatred. If the individual will has an enemy, says Shelley's myth of Prometheus, that enemy is its own creation and can be destroyed in the same way that it was created, by an act of the will.



## II

In mythological terms the relationship between victim and tyrant which obsessed Shelley throughout his development is symbolized as that between the hero and the dragon which he must slay in order to release his "Lady Soul," or the latent capacity within himself as "cosmic man" for universal love, personified in Shelley's myth as Asia. In depth-psychology this relationship is interpreted as that between father-imago and hero-son, and in Freudian psychoanalysis it is reduced a further degree to the relationship between the biological father and son. All of these systems, however, are no more than symbolic schemata for expressing the inexpressible, the "deep truth" which is "imageless," but since they all "work" in the case of Shelley, it is an intellectual temptation to try to trace the patterns of the schemata, to follow the rites de passage through the development of his personality, his activities in the empirical world, his personal relationships, and, of course, ultimately in his work, where the real measure of the "man" must be taken. The intention of the present chapter, therefore, is to follow Shelley through his "heroic" transformations in his personal capacity as man--in the empirical world if not of it--from revolutionary activist to social philosopher to Platonic mystic, keeping in mind, of course, that this development is not a linear one but an organic, concentric unfolding of an a priori archetypal system which Shelley embodied from his origin. The relationship with "authority," both true authority and false, is the crucial issue in this development and will form the central theme of the discussion. The following chapter will attempt to demonstrate the manifestations of the poet's heroic transformations on the transpersonal





level in the mythic tales of his heroes, Alastor, Laon, and Prometheus.

First, however, since the psycho-mythic figure which represents authority is the father, it is necessary to explain more fully than I have done thus far the significance of this symbolic figure as it is regarded by the various schools of myth interpretation. In the patriarchal myths of the west from Sophocles to Milton rebellion against the father is a consistent element of the heroic pattern. Whether the rebel son is punished for his presumption depends on the degree of conservatism in the ethos from which the myth arises. In Freudian terms the rebellion is motivated by the desire for exclusive possession of the mother, which is prohibited by the patriarchal incest taboo. While Jung, as we have seen, transformed the pattern of the "family romance" into a less reductive system by giving the personal relationships transpersonal meaning, he continued to regard incest and its prohibition as central, viewing it as the creative dialectic without which psychic growth cannot take place. A practising psychoanalyst of the Jungian school explains the mythic dimension of Jung's system thus:

The dragon is the mythological father, who stands in the son's way to the mother. The father represents the son's active resistance against his own incest wish. The crime unconsciously desired by the son is imputed to the father, though disguised as a murderous intention against the son. Neurotic patients often dream of the father as a being who inspires them with mortal dread. Hence, in the myth, the hero is faced with a fearsome monster or terrible giant.<sup>26</sup>

The psychiatric pre-occupation with pathology, however, threatens to impede recognition that the phenomenon of rebellion, or antagonism against the father, is not only a healthy but a necessary part of the psycho-evolutionary process, the living embodiment of which is the hero. The meaning of his relationship with the father and of the transformation





it must undergo is explained by Campbell, still in terms of the Freudian nursery romance, but with an added metaphysical dimension:

. . . the ogre aspect of the father is a reflex of the victim's own ego--derived from the sensational nursery scene that has been left behind, but projected before; and the fixating idolatry of that pedagogical nonthing is itself the fault that keeps one steeped in a sense of sin, sealing the potentially adult spirit from a better balanced, more realistic view of the father, and therewith of the world. Atonement (at-one-ment) consists in no more than the abandonment of that self-generated double monster-dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed Id). But this requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself, and that is what is difficult. One must have faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside the bedeviling god's scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve.<sup>27</sup>

We need not, as an earlier chapter of this paper has explained, resort to the nursery triangle for an explanation of the meaning of the hero's rebellion. Indeed, according to Erich Neumann, it is misleading to do so, since post-Freudian anthropologists, especially Bronislaw Malinowski, have established that the original situation of the human group is "prepatriarchal, if we wish to avoid the somewhat dubious term matriarchal,"<sup>28</sup> and that in this situation it is the maternal uncle--with whom there is no rivalry for possession of the mother--who is hated and feared. The term "father archetype" is used by Neumann only as a concession to "our own patriarchal culture"<sup>29</sup> and refers to any mythic figure who embodies the old order, whatever his familial relationship to the hero. While a creative dialectic occurs, then, between the generations it is not necessarily related to the problem of incest:

"The fathers" are the representatives of law and order, from the earliest taboos to the most modern juridical systems; they hand down the highest values of civilization, whereas the mothers control the highest, i.e., the deepest, values of life and nature. The world of the fathers is thus the world of collective values; it is historical and related to the fluctuating level of conscious and cultural development within the group. The prevailing system of cultural values, i.e., the canon of values which gives a culture its peculiar physiognomy and its stability, has its roots



in the fathers, the grown men who represent and reinforce the religious, ethical, political, and social structure of the collective.<sup>30</sup>

Neumann goes on to explain how the collective values evolve into a "spiritual system" symbolically associated with "heaven," because heaven "stands at the opposite pole to the feminine earth,"<sup>31</sup> and how that system tends to inhibit heroic will:

[The "Terrible Male"] functions not only as a principle that disintegrates consciousness, but even more as one that fixes it in a wrong direction. It is he who prevents the continued development of the ego and upholds the old system of consciousness. . . . He acts, as it were, like a spiritual system which, from beyond and above, captures and destroys the son's consciousness. This spiritual system appears as the binding force of the old law, the old religion, the old morality, the old order; as conscience, convention, tradition, or any other spiritual phenomenon that seizes hold of the son and obstructs his progress into the future.<sup>32</sup>

For the hero, therefore, who represents the new consciousness, "the hostile dragon is the old order, the obsolete psychic state which threatens to swallow him up again."<sup>33</sup>

Shelley in his role as hero during a historical crisis was compelled to challenge the old order, the false authority of the "fathers" of this world, but in the name of the true father "seated on the throne of his own soul," for as Neumann explains, the "creative individual," that is, the "hero,"<sup>34</sup> has two sets of parents, one personal and individual, and the other transpersonal and archetypal. "The fact that the hero has two fathers and two mothers," he says, "is a central feature in the canon of the hero myth."<sup>35</sup> If, therefore, the hero rejects one father it is out of loyalty to the other:

[The hero] is the enemy of the old ruling system, of the old cultural values and the existing court of conscience, and so he necessarily comes into conflict with the fathers and their spokesman, the personal father.

In this conflict the "inner voice," the command of the transpersonal father or father archetype who wants the world to change, collides with the personal father who speaks for the old law.<sup>36</sup>







Rollo May, the contemporary existentialist, also expresses this concept in his discussion of the mythic dimension of Sartre's The Flies:

". . . for his human fulfilment and human dignity [man] must develop the capacity to defy Zeus. This defiance should be assumed, however, in the name of something greater . . . ."37

In this context the sense of persecution of which Shelley felt himself to be the victim at the hands of his own father is more readily understandable. "When we examine the history of the individual," observes Neumann, "we find that the personal reality of the parents is not only distorted but may sometimes be completely inverted if the archetypal canon demands it."<sup>38</sup> Shelley's relationship to his own father is a good example of this phenomenon, for the character of Timothy Shelley seems to have had very little to do with the antagonism he inspired in his son. If, as Verner Moore suggests in a psychological study of the poet, he had a "father complex,"<sup>39</sup> in which his father represented tyranny in every form, it is not a complex for which Timothy Shelley can personally be held responsible, for he was no less affectionate or more tyrannical than most fathers of his time and class, whatever derogatory comments Shelley made in his letters in an attempt to "provide a satisfactorily Godwinian picture of parental tyranny."<sup>40</sup> It is unlikely, according to Cameron, that his father attempted "any authoritarianism beyond the normal bounds of a father-and-son relationship in nineteenth-century England . . . ."41 Shelley, however, could not brook authoritarianism in any degree, and he saw his father as the most intimate embodiment in his life of the tyranny against which his young spleen was directed. In his role as archetypal rebel he could not afford the luxury of filial affection.



Cameron is representative of those of Shelley's critics who defend Timothy Shelley against what Daniel MacDonald calls the "Shelley enthusiasts," who "decried the father too much in their efforts to canonize the son."<sup>42</sup> MacDonald goes on:

It would indeed be strange to find any father at that time who would be capable of giving our poet that guidance and training which his nature demanded. It was a time when might was right, when the rod held a large place in the formation of a boy's character. We must not be too severe then on the father if he was unacquainted with the proper way of dealing with his erratic son . . . . It was his judgment rather than his heart that was at fault.<sup>43</sup>

G.S. Gordon expresses a like sympathy for the father:

Age, authority, experience, custom, compromise, and, let me add, kindness of heart confront, in the muddled person of Timothy Shelley, the logic of a stripling, the inhumanity of the enthusiast, the terrible rectitude of youth. . . . It is a pathetic spectacle, this clash of two sincerities in one house, the young brain of the new generation pitted against the groggy heart of the old: groggy, but as we say, in the right place.<sup>44</sup>

If Shelley "never loved" his father,<sup>45</sup> as he declared in a letter to Godwin, it was not because of anything Timothy Shelley did consciously, at least in the formative years, to alienate his son's affections. Indeed, the impression that at least one revealing anecdote gives of the father's attitude to the son is one of over-indulgence and an excess of fatherly pride rather than rigid authoritarianism. Cameron reports that when Timothy Shelley first took his son to Oxford he marched him into the best bookstore in the city and gave him carte blanche in the purchase of books and stationery, saying to the bookseller (the original source of the story), "My son here has a literary turn; he is already an author, and do pray indulge him in his printing freaks."<sup>46</sup>

Whatever latent friction there was in the relationship, however, came to a head when Shelley was expelled from Oxford in 1811, along with





his friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, for writing and distributing The Necessity of Atheism. His father, a respected member of the Christian establishment, was naturally shocked and hurt. He expressed his indignation, first, by cancelling his invitation to Hogg to spend the Easter vacation at the Shelleys' home, Field Place, and then by going to London to demand a recantation and apology from the delinquents. When parental authority proved to be ineffectual and he tried to meet the young intellectuals on their own terms, using arguments instead of threats, they responded in "a spirit almost of mockery,"<sup>47</sup> laughing at his pronunciation of Paley, from whose Evidences of Christianity he had drawn his arguments. Shelley must have been bent on making of his father an enemy, for even when the elder Shelley confessed to some religious skepticism on his own part, Shelley called him "a disgrace to reason" and regretted that the cause "gained weakness by the accession of weakness."<sup>48</sup> Even Godwin, from whom the poet had learned to be scornful of parental authority, was later to express disapproval of Shelley's treatment of his father.<sup>49</sup>

This crisis marked the beginning of "a long stiff battle between Shelley and his father,"<sup>50</sup> in which Shelley, from the point of view of his own morality of love, does not come off well. He seems to have used his father as a convenient target in his attack on all principles of morality which inhibit individual will, especially that principle which governs the relationship between ruler and subject, obedience. Stovall explains that he "adopted as his own Godwin's dictum that 'one man can in no case be bound to yield obedience to any other man or set of men upon earth' [Political Justice]"--which of course referred to a political situation--and applied it to the relations of father and son."<sup>51</sup> After





the expulsion crisis he wrote to his father:

Obedience is in my opinion a word which should have no existence. . . . Yes, you can command it. The institutions of society have made you, though liable to be misled by passion and prejudice like others, the Head of a family; and I confess it is almost natural for minds not of the highest order to value even the errors whence they derive their importance.<sup>52</sup>

Obedience comes under attack elsewhere in his writings. In the Notes to Queen Mab he says, "Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks he can do something better than reason,"<sup>53</sup> and in a letter to Miss Hitchener, "Obedience (were society as I could wish it) is a word which ought to be without meaning."<sup>54</sup>

Shelley was equally contemptuous of the concept of duty, and determined "to conquer duty to father, duty indeed of all kind."<sup>55</sup> Yet, ironically, when it was in his own interests to do so, he was not above invoking duty and Christianity, both of which he had repudiated. When his father withdrew his allowance upon Shelley's elopement with Harriet Westbrook in the summer after his expulsion from Oxford, he reminded his father that it was his Christian duty not only to forgive his son and repent but to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance,"<sup>56</sup> that is, support Shelley and his wife. And when Mr. Shelley confided in Hogg's father, who thereupon warned his son against further association with Shelley, the poet accused his father of libel: "This is a cowardly, base, contemptible expedient of persecution: it is not enough that you have deprived me of the means of subsistence. . . but that you must take advantage of the defencelessness which our relation entails upon me, to libel me. . . . You have treated me ill, vilely."<sup>57</sup> In rejecting his father he seems to have been driven by a compulsion that goes beyond the explanations of clinical psychology. Cameron speculates that Shelley's



"condescension" toward his father was acquired from his mother's rejection of her husband and hence of "a male pattern."<sup>58</sup> He believes, furthermore, that Mrs. Shelley, rather than her husband, was the "formative factor"<sup>59</sup> in Shelley's development. Many sons have dominant mothers, however, and become neither poets nor radicals. It is not, therefore, on the personal level but on the transpersonal level where myth and psychology meet that the enigma of Shelley must be solved.

### III

Implicit in Shelley's rejection of his father is his rejection of the whole social order, which he regarded as the enemy of the best within himself and of an unrealized potential in the human race. This rejection of the establishment became apparent as soon as he was thrust out of the "paradise" of Field Place, where he was "indulged by his father, petted by his mother, and worshipfully looked up to by all of his sisters as being of a superior order."<sup>60</sup> The "heroic" clash with "the fathers" began at Syon House school, to which he was sent at the age of ten: "Shelley was a reformer at his first school, and from that time to the end never came . . . directly or indirectly, under any authority, public or private which he regarded with respect."<sup>61</sup> The relentless bullying of which he was the victim at Syon House may have contributed to his life-long hatred of the abuse of power in any form. If the persecution he received at the hands of his schoolmates, Cameron suggests, "produced a sense of isolation and retaliation, it also laid the psychological basis for that hatred of tyranny which Shelley later integrated . . . into his political philosophy."<sup>62</sup> As a boy of eleven or twelve, says another





biographer, he was already formulating the moral stand which we associate with the mature Shelley:

The clashing, frustrating discord of his two worlds of imagination and reality . . . led this tenacious, highly sensitive child to a truly amazing decision. For him the true world was that of his imagination and ideals; he would fight the false brutal world of reality and champion its victims.<sup>63</sup>

The resolution of the adolescent anticipates the final statement of Prometheus Unbound, written some twenty years later, and reveals a consistency of purpose formed very early:

I will be wise  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power, for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize  
Without reproach or check . . .<sup>64</sup>

As the horizons of his world extended to Eton, Oxford and then London, the clash between the idealism embodied in this resolution and the cruel realities of the existing social establishment inevitably aggravated Shelley's innate radicalism. As Daniel MacDonald explains, "Radicalism . . . springs from discontent. The worse existing conditions are, the more pronounced will be the radicalism that usually arises. Conditions --moral, political and social--during the latter half of the eighteenth century were very bad indeed."<sup>65</sup>

The extension of his private rebellion into the political sphere was therefore inevitable. Indeed, it is fair, I think, to say that he became a poet because he saw poetry as a powerful weapon in his battle for social and political reform. J.P. Guinn says in Shelley's Political Thought:

. . . an impulse to move men toward reform of their lives and social institutions is his most constant and deepest source of inspiration. Though



much concerned with establishing a name for himself as a poet, he would have preferred to be remembered as a reformer. . . . His youthful effort to bring about reform in Ireland in 1812 and succeeding attempts to remedy grievances of the English tell us that he considered politics the starting point for reform.<sup>66</sup>

Shelley himself wrote to Peacock as late as 1819: "I consider Poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I should aspire to the latter; for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonizing the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled."<sup>67</sup> The caricature of Shelley as an ethereal spirit with "ineffectual wings" has tended to obscure his powers as "a thinker, and not only a thinker but as a radical thinker."<sup>68</sup> He was, furthermore, not only a radical thinker, but an activist, and he began his political career as an activist rather than a theorist.

Ireland was his "Call to Adventure." He had already experienced the mythic "Departure" as expulsion from family and class and confrontation with economic hardship, but, as Cameron observes, "Ireland took the process a step further. Experience once more gave life to abstraction, but, this time, not so much personal experience as social experience."<sup>69</sup> Shelley believed that Ireland was in the throes of a movement which was "part of a European or world movement of libertarian revival" and "considered himself a political propagandist with a duty to assist in this movement."<sup>70</sup> As he explained in the Address to the Irish People, reform in Ireland was to be "subordinate and preparatory to the great and lasting one which shall bring about the peace, the harmony, and the happiness of Ireland, England, Europe, and the World."<sup>71</sup>

He went to Dublin in February, 1812, having already prepared the Address, the purpose of which was "to familiarize to uneducated apprehensions





ideas of liberty, benevolence, peace and toleration."<sup>72</sup> Within two weeks fifteen thousand copies of the pamphlet were off the press, nearly all of which were distributed, some from the balcony of his lodgings to any passer-by who "looked likely."<sup>73</sup> In the Address he sets forth the political creed to which he was to remain true to the end of his life. The foundation of this creed is his distrust of governments and his faith in the capacity of human reason to ultimately bring about a world-wide anarchist Utopia:

Government is an evil; it is only the thoughtlessness and vices of men that make it a necessary evil. When all men are good and wise, government will of itself decay, so long as men continue foolish and vicious, so long will Government, even such a Government as that of England, continue necessary in order to prevent the crimes of bad men. Society is produced by the wants, Government by the wickedness, and a state of just and happy equality by the improvement and reason of man.<sup>74</sup>

This egalitarian state is to be brought about, he believed, not through violent upheaval but by "fair words and reason."<sup>75</sup> Indeed, throughout the pamphlet he warns repeatedly against the use of violence because "nothing is so well-fitted to produce slavery, tyranny, and vice, as the violence which is attributed to the friends of liberty, and which the real friends of liberty are the only persons who disdain."<sup>76</sup> He insists that "Mildness, sobriety, and reason are the effectual methods of forwarding the ends of liberty and happiness."<sup>77</sup> He saw more clearly than most of his own contemporaries, as well as many of ours, the futility of violence as a means of political reform. He did not believe, furthermore, that the ideal state would come overnight: "I look to these things with hope and pleasure, because I consider that they will certainly happen. . . . But I do not consider that they will or can immediately happen; their arrival will be gradual, and it all depends upon yourselves how soon or how late . . . ."<sup>78</sup>





Shelley's pragmatism and moderation, which acted as ballast to his idealism, are even more evident in A Philosophical View of Reform (1820). While insisting still on the necessity of radical reform and envisioning the ultimate establishment of an egalitarian state in England, he at the same time would convince the reader that,

Any sudden attempt at universal suffrage would produce an immature attempt at a Republic. It is better that an object so inexpressibly great and sacred should never have been attempted than that it should be attempted and fail. It is no prejudice to the ultimate establishment of the boldest political innovations that we temporize so that when they shall be accomplished they may be rendered permanent.<sup>79</sup>

Again in this work he warns that insurrection is but the "last resort of resistance"<sup>80</sup> and that the "true patriot will endeavour to enlighten and to unite the nation and animate it with enthusiasm and confidence."<sup>81</sup>

Throughout the work the emphasis is on the enlightenment of the masses: ". . . they should see the clear grounds of their rights, the objects to which they ought to tend; and be impressed with the just persuasion that patience and reason and endurance are the means of a calm yet irresistible progress."<sup>82</sup>

To this end the concerted political action of enlightened leaders is necessary, and it was to organize action that Shelley went to Dublin. In his second Irish pamphlet, Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists (1812), he explains the nature of government as it should be for as long as it continues to be needed:

Government can have no rights: it is a delegation for the purpose of securing them to others. Man becomes a subject of government, not that he may be in a worse but that he may be in a better state than that of unorganized society. The strength of government is the happiness of the governed. All government existing for the happiness of others is just only so far as it exists by their consent, and useful only so far as it operates to their well-being.<sup>83</sup>



The French Revolution had been based on such a doctrine but had failed, he says in the same pamphlet, because of the lack of enough enlightened leaders to explain to the masses how best to attain their ends.

Centuries of exploitation and degradation had reduced the French populace to a level of understanding at which violent retaliation seemed the only apparent means of expressing their newly roused sense of injustice.

Violence, however, results only in counter-despotism. Although the Revolution had miscarried because its leaders were not enlightened

enough to understand this principle,<sup>84</sup> Shelley never lost faith in the

spirit which had activated the Revolution and believed that it "had prepared the way for the true revolution of peace and love."<sup>85</sup> The

"miseries and errors" produced by this mass act of "revenge" merely afforded "additional proof of the necessity of that long-delayed change which it accompanied and disgraced."<sup>86</sup> Mass retaliation is condemned,

not because it is morally wrong, but because it is politically impracticable, tending to perpetuate the very injustices it would set right. A people

"rendered brutal, ignorant, servile and bloody by slavery"<sup>87</sup> could not be

expected, however, as Shelley explained in the Preface to The Revolt of Islam, to comprehend such a refined notion:

Could they listen to the pleas of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches us now.<sup>88</sup>





## IV

Shelley's a priori radicalism, then, manifested itself first on the personal level in his rejection of his father, and secondly on the social and political level, in his involvement in the Irish problem and in his concern, expressed in his political prose works, with reform at home and abroad. A third and still more important phase of his progress as a rebel is to be found on the metaphysical or "religious" level.

It is not always recognized that the three metaphysical traditions which Shelley inherited, Platonism, Christianity, and Gnosticism, are all heretical and subversive in their most "radical" form (using the term in its original etymological or "radical" sense). All three are characterized by a radical dualism which divides Being into two realms, one of which is more "real" or of a higher value than the other. Man's own being is characterized by this dualism, so that he has a "higher self" which belongs to the divine order and a lower self which binds him to the world of mutability. When the higher self is realized and freed from the lower self, it must, by its nature, subvert the lower order that prevails in "this world."

According to both Woodman<sup>89</sup> and Barnard, the single most important development in Shelley's thought was the shift from Godwinian rationalism to a metaphysical philosophy in which, Barnard says, "Platonic, neo-Platonic, and Christian elements are fused."<sup>90</sup> It is not my purpose here to trace "influences" and "sources," but an understanding of the sense in which Shelley is a Platonist, nevertheless, is necessary to an understanding of his concept of his own role as poet. The definitive study of the subject is The Platonism of Shelley by James A. Notopoulos,



in which the author divides Platonism into three "levels": first, the "indirect Platonism" of the European philosophical tradition which A.N. Whitehead said "consists of a series of footnotes to Plato";<sup>91</sup> second, "direct Platonism," derived from a study of Plato's works; and third, "natural Platonism," which is "the final supreme level," for it is the Platonism of any individual who has "Plato's wonder, inspiration, and insight into the same realm of speculation."<sup>92</sup> Natural Platonism is the living spirit of the original Plato, who is brought back to be transformed, in the way that Milton is brought back and transformed in the figure of Los-Blake;<sup>93</sup> for "Plato is not a static god but a dynamic creator."<sup>94</sup> He is "a creative force within a creative realm. His concepts are not final."<sup>95</sup> Shelley is the Platonist par excellence of this third level, although, Notopoulos says, "the living soul of Shelley's Platonism is a unity of all three."<sup>96</sup> When Shelley speaks of the "Spirit of Nature" in Queen Mab (I, 264), or of an "unseen Power" in "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1), or of an "invisible world"<sup>97</sup> in the Defence of Poetry, he shares with Plato, who was to Shelley "essentially a poet,"<sup>98</sup> the intuited concept of a realm of Ideas than which the empirical world is less real, but in his transformation of Plato's concept the invisible realm is not absolute and inert but engaged in a dynamic dialectic with the visible world, a dialectic of which the poet as "Man" is the living embodiment:

Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Aeolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre.<sup>99</sup>





If this dialectic experienced by the poet and expressed in his works is the moral instrument that transforms society, as Shelley believes it is, it follows that the poet, or "prophet" as he was called "in earlier epochs of the world,"<sup>100</sup> is one who subverts the prevailing moral order. When Plato banned poets from his Republic, he may have sensed the subversive nature of his own inspiration, for according to Woodman, he was an esoteric inheritor of the Dionysian and Orphic traditions.<sup>101</sup> Dionysian intoxication, later refined into the Orphic divine madness<sup>102</sup> enables an individual to free the god, or divine self, within, and by implication places him above the law. Plato's fear that "inspired" individuals would undermine the state, then, was more politically realistic than Shelley's confidence that poets are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world,"<sup>103</sup> for to the true bearer of moral inspiration, the creature like Shelley's own Prometheus, the law is a tyrant who is overcome at the moment man's own divinity is released.

Shelley's Christ, as a bearer of moral inspiration, is, according to Woodman, a "Dionysian hero,"<sup>104</sup> whose role is to release the imprisoned god within the self. Freed from the restrictions of Christian orthodoxy he bears an archetypal identity both with Milton's Satan and with Shelley's own Prometheus. All three represent that defiant and demonic power which asserts the divinity of the individual against the prevailing system of values. Since orthodox Christianity was, Shelley believed, a system designed to frustrate and repress this power, he was obliged by his role as poet-hero to hate it with all his might, as Prometheus before the moment of regeneration hated Jupiter:

Yet here I swear, and as I break my oath may Infinity Eternity blast me, here I swear that never will I forgive Christianity! it is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge. . . . Oh! how I wish I were





the Antichrist!--that it were mine to crush the Demon, to hurl him to his native Hell never to rise again. . . . Oh! Christianity! When I pardon this last this severest of thy persecutions may God (if there be a God), blast me! Has vengeance in its armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful!"<sup>105</sup>

Shelley's wrath was directed not against the man Christ who emerges from the gospel portrait as an embodiment of the subversive impulse, but, he says in A Philosophical View of Reform, against the "superstition which has disguised itself under the name of the system of Jesus . . . . The New Testament is in everyone's hand, and the few who ever read it with the simple sincerity of an unbiased judgement may perceive how distinct from the opinions of any of those professing themselves orthodox were the doctrines and the actions of Jesus Christ."<sup>106</sup>

The "source" of Shelley's antinomian tendencies, grounded in the dualism that divides divine love from worldly law, is to be found in still a third tradition, one too often neglected in the study of Shelley, the Gnostic tradition. From Queen Mab through to The Triumph of Life his myth, like the Gnostic myth, is that of a cosmic struggle between two kingdoms each with its mythic ruler, but at the same time of a transcendent "One" in which the duality is dissolved. Barnard's study of Shelley's religion has done much to banish a popular misconception that attributes to the poet a simple-minded optimism. He argues convincingly that few poets have been more agonizingly aware of the powerful opposition with which the Spirit of Good is confronted, even though he will not "grant to evil a real equality of power with good."<sup>107</sup> Shelley's belief in the ultimate supremacy of good, however, misleads even Barnard to the mistaken conclusion that the poet "cannot therefore accept the Manichaeian view."<sup>108</sup> The essay "On the Devil, and Devils"



reveals that Shelley understands the nature of Manichaeism better than his critic:

The Manichaeian philosophy respecting the origin and government of the world, if not true, is at least an hypothesis conformable to the experience of actual facts. To suppose that the world was created and is superintended by two spirits of a balanced power and opposite dispositions, is simply a personification of the struggle which we experience within ourselves, and which we perceive in the operation of external things as they affect us, between good and evil. The supposition that the good spirit is, or hereafter will be, superior, is a personification of the principle of hope, and that thirst for improvement without which, present evil would be intolerable.<sup>109</sup>

In Shelley's own myth the duality is personified as two "equal Gods":

Know then, that from the depth of ages old,  
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold  
Ruling the world with a divided lot,  
Immortal, all-Pervading, manifold,  
Twin Genii, equal Gods--when life and thought  
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential  
Nought. (Revolt of Islam, I, xxv).

One of these twin powers, "The Fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay" (I, xxix) is undoubtedly the same "evil spirit" of which Shelley speaks in An Essay on Christianity as having "dominion in this imperfect world."<sup>110</sup> The theme of Adonais, furthermore, implies that pain and suffering belong to the world of space and time which "stains the white radiance of Eternity" (469). Even when Shelley seems to be positing a benevolent Nature, as in the early Queen Mab, he is not referring to material phenomena per se, Barnard argues,<sup>111</sup> but to the Spirit of Good that is co-eternal with nature.

Since tradition--social, moral and religious--belongs to "this imperfect world," Shelley shares with the Gnostics the belief that redemption of the "pneuma," the fragment of divinity hidden within each man's nature, is possible only by "blatantly subverting the meaning of





the most firmly established, and preferably also the most revered, elements of tradition."<sup>112</sup> Like the Gnostics, Shelley inverts traditional symbols of good and evil. Just as the serpent, for example, was for the Gnostics not man's enemy but "the beginning of all gnosis" and therefore the champion of human freedom,<sup>113</sup> so the serpent in The Revolt of Islam is "the Spirit of Good" who was "cursed and blasphemed as he passed; for none/Knew good from evil" (I, 375-376). The same process of inversion is at work in much of his essay "On the Devil, and Devils" where he declares:

Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent, in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy,-- not from any mistaken notion of bringing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the open and alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments.<sup>114</sup>

Even in his choice of Prometheus as the supreme symbol of the regenerate soul, Shelley is true to the Gnostic heresy. For the Gnostics, too, Prometheus, as the challenger of the tyrannical pantheon of Olympus, is the type of the "pneumáticos," or spiritual man, whose loyalty is not to the god of this world but to that "Alien Life" dwelling both beyond and within.<sup>115</sup>

Poets, as "the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration,"<sup>116</sup> or as the bearers of a "gnosis" not confined to historical eras or religious systems, perpetuate heresy and subvert the established order. They are the rebels who overthrow the false father of this world in order to release, and achieve atonement with, the divine father dwelling within. Each of Shelley's mythic heroes, whose careers we shall now trace, projects a stage in his progress toward the internal integration of the will of the human rebel-son with the will of the divine father-king.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE REBEL

Stages in the evolution of Shelley's consciousness reveal their transpersonal significance in the myths of the heroes of Alastor, The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound. Statements that both Shelley himself and his wife make about the poetry, as well as internal evidence in each poem, establish an unequivocal identity between a mood, or phase of development experienced by the poet, and its transpersonal expression as a hero-motif in the poetry.

I suggested in the foregoing chapter that a central issue of Shelley's metaphysics is the relationship between individual will and the authority of that power to which he gives the term "Necessity." His psycho-evolutionary development, then, is related to transformation in his concept of Necessity and in his relationship with it. Frye suggests that Necessity is Shelley's substitute for the Christian God,<sup>1</sup> but to say that contributes little to an explanation of the metaphysical or psychological dynamics behind either Shelley's concept or the Christian figure. The poet's life-long preoccupation with the concept, whatever name or form he gives it, suggests that it represents an internal dynamic in order to come to terms with which he had to pass through a series of rites de passage. "Necessity" plays the role in Shelley's myth of the "androgynous figure of the uroboros,"<sup>2</sup> the Janus-faced parental imago against whom the hero must assert his individual will in order to win spiritual autonomy but to whom, paradoxically, he must ultimately return in a final act of re-integration or synthesis.





The poet's early formulation of the doctrine in Queen Mab allows no place for the autonomous heroic ego, the "free-will." "Necessity," whom he addresses in the opening passage as "thou mother of the world" (VI, 198), is, as he explains in the Notes, "an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act."<sup>3</sup> History, then, pursues its progressive course independent of the conscious effort of the individual, in whom psychological forces are themselves aspects of Necessity:

Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter; they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is.<sup>4</sup>

Here is the Freudian theory of psychic determinism a century before Freud. When Shelley speaks of the "delusions of free-will,"<sup>5</sup> or when he says, in An Essay on Christianity, "We live and move and think; but we are not the creators of our own origin and existences, we are not the arbiters of every motion of our own complicated natures. . . ."<sup>6</sup> he anticipates that "crisis of will"<sup>7</sup> in our time for which Rollo May holds Freud mainly responsible. Freud's insistence that the belief in psychic freedom and choice "is quite unscientific and must give ground before the claims of a determinism which governs mental life"<sup>8</sup> played into the hands, says May, of modern man's "most pervasive tendency--which has become almost an endemic disease in the middle of the twentieth century--to see himself as passive, the willy-nilly product of the powerful juggernaut of psychological drives."<sup>9</sup>





The heroic poetry that follows Queen Mab reveals that Shelley recognized and struggled against the destructive potential inherent in the doctrine, for when the will is destroyed so is social responsibility and compassion, the sense of involvement in what Blake called the "Universal Brotherhood of Eden" (The Four Zoas, Night the First, p. 3, 1.5), the impulse that opposes itself to "Selfhood" (Jerusalem, p. 5, 1.21), the willful, self-directed ego. In Alastor we see the beginning of the heroic struggle in Shelley's ambivalent attitude to the "imperious necessity"<sup>10</sup> which drives the hero to his ruin. Shelley, as the teller of the tale (for the purpose at hand to be distinguished from the hero of the tale), takes an antagonistic stand against the Power which determines the fate of the hero-poet. At this stage of his development Shelley regards the impulse toward vision as a curse, for it seems to demand total commitment while at the same time threatening to annihilate individual will and social consciousness, and to alienate the poet from the rest of humanity. The role of the poet-hero in Alastor is associated with loneliness, alienation, narcissism, incestuous regression, and death. It constitutes the Byronic archetype, the hero arrested in his development at that stage in which he is hopelessly caught in the grip of his own "libido," of those psychological forces that Rollo May calls "the daimonic"<sup>11</sup> or that Erich Neumann calls the "Terrible Mother."<sup>12</sup> At this stage, says Neumann, the hero is "self-absorbed and narcissistic,"<sup>13</sup> the very mood in which, according to Shelley's wife,<sup>14</sup> the poet composed Alastor. Shelley himself in the Preface is specific about the cause of his hero's downfall: "The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin."<sup>15</sup>

The Revolt of Islam represents an attempt to resolve the conflict



between the inner and outer directions of the libidinous energy, between private vision and social consciousness, between the individual will and the impersonal forces of history, but only in Prometheus Unbound does Shelley actually achieve the synthesis. In the figure of Prometheus the paradoxes and "contrarieties" dissolve, for he is at one and the same time defiance and love, will and Necessity, individual man and universal man.

## II

An interpretation of Alastor that takes into account the contribution of psychoanalysis and depth-psychology to modern literary criticism is long overdue. To say that the poem is about the poet's passionate quest for an erotic ideal,<sup>16</sup> or the imaginative fusion of the real and ideal<sup>17</sup> is simply to interpret the work in terms of traditional metaphysics and does virtually nothing to explain, or even describe, the dynamics at work in the poem.

Alastor is a poem about the poet's relationship to the "unconscious" in either the Freudian or Jungian sense. The narrator of the tale tells us explicitly that he has been long acquainted with the "Mother of this unfathomable world" (18) or the "Great Parent" (45) through "incommunicable dream,/And twilight phantasms" (39-40). Jung, the reader may recall, regards the Magna Mater or "anima" as a "personification of the collective unconscious,"<sup>18</sup> and both Freud and Jung have established that the unconscious reveals itself to the conscious in the form of images that appear in dream and fantasy. The opening invocation to the unconscious in Alastor implies that the "Poet" of the





tale is a figure that Shelley is raising from his own unconscious, that it therefore represents an inner dynamic of Shelley's own emerging identity as a poet, with the attendant conflict, ambivalence, and anxiety that accompany crises or rites de passage in the quest for identity. Having started his career as a political activist, and continued as a propagandist for social reform, he now experiences a fear that he may be only a visionary; and like Keats, as we shall see, Shelley at this stage in his genesis as a poet is not sure whether a visionary totally committed to his vision has any social value. To be a visionary may be to surrender conscious participation in the human community to the fascination of the unconscious, to be destroyed by "too exquisite a perception of its influences,"<sup>19</sup> as the hero of Alastor is destroyed.

The poet of Alastor, with his "wild eyes" (63) and "scattered hair" (248), is the archetypal image of the visionary, reminding one of the figure in "Kubla Khan" with "flashing eyes" and "floating hair" (50) or of Collins' "rich-haired Youth of Morn" ("Ode on the Poetical Character," 39). Shelley's identity with the archetype is revealed in his account of the Poet's history. He was nurtured by "solemn vision, and bright silver dream" (67); he is "Gentle, and brave, and generous" (58); he has been formed by "divine philosophy" (71), by Nature (81), and by contemplating the ruins of ancient civilizations (109); he has been offered the love of real women but found it difficult to accept because of the fascination of the "veiled maid" of his dreams,<sup>20</sup> whose voice "was like the voice of his own soul" (151-153).

The external evidence provided by Mary Shelley's "Note on Alastor" also suggests an identity between Shelley and the hero of the tale by revealing that the poem was the outcome of a spiritual crisis in



Shelley's life. Poverty, loss of friends, and ill health had already "brought home to him the sad realities of life," and caused him "to turn his eyes inward," and then in the Spring of 1815 "an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption."<sup>21</sup> As with Keats, the "anticipation of death"<sup>22</sup> brought him to an identity crisis.

Shelley tells us in the Preface that the poem "may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind,"<sup>23</sup> implying that it is representative not so much of a unique aberration found in particular personalities as of a universal experience of existential crisis, occurring when one is confronted by the threat of demonic powers from within, those powers that Shelley refers to as "the furies of an irresistible passion."<sup>24</sup> Although an eminent critic denies the "curse-motif"<sup>25</sup> in the poem, insisting that there is no avenging spirit who punishes the poet, his very nature, as it is determined by "Necessity," is a curse. While the hero's "generous error," his "attempt to exist without human sympathy" in his pursuit of the ideal, makes him superior to the "morally dead," who love nothing on this earth and cherish no hope beyond,<sup>26</sup> it at the same time alienates him from the human community.

The poem, then, can be read as a projection of, or attempt to personify, Shelley's anxiety about the direction in which his genius was leading him. His passionate sense of social commitment seemed to be threatened by the lure of "too exquisite," and therefore fatal, a perception of the visionary realm, which "strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction."<sup>27</sup> It is not death per se to which he is referring, but symbolic death, the drowning of consciousness in the visionary realm of the unconscious, the threat of which produces





the same anxiety that is projected in Wordsworth's dream of the Bedouin, and in Keats' Lamia.

In Alastor the anxiety emerges in images of the "anima" in her negative or demonic aspect. While in the introductory passage she appears as the traditional beneficent Muse, her demonic nature becomes increasingly apparent as the poet proceeds to deeper levels of "dream" and approaches her "inmost sanctuary" (38). The poem has the same dream-within-a-dream structure as Keats' Fall of Hyperion: that is, the hero of a visionary tale falls asleep himself and has a vision (139-191). It is in this "inner dream" that the "Terrible Mother" or demonic anima is encountered, "la belle dame sans merci," or the Lorelei figure who lures men to destruction with her siren song:

Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
Thoughts the most dear to him and poesy,  
Herself a poet. (158-161).

Upon awakening from the "trance" (192) the poet, doomed forever to pursue "the bright shadow of that lovely dream" (233), is compared to "an eagle grasped/In the folds of the green serpent" (228). Having surrendered to her "dissolving arms" (187), he has committed the "Byronic" crime, the regressive act of incest with the sister of his soul, the fatal sin of narcissistic self-centredness. The Narcissus motif is later re-inforced by the image of the well to which the poet comes in the darkest, most dense part of the forest. He gazes into the "liquid mirror" (462) where

His eyes beheld  
Their own wan light through the reflected lines  
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,  
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. (469-474).





Here again he experiences the fatal vision as "two eyes,/Two starry eyes" which "seemed with their serene and azure smiles/To beckon him" (489-492).

Surrender to the vision dooms him to the fate of the lonely, alienated, wandering Cain figure, withdrawing further and further from humanity and the external world to pursue a lonely quest through the "wide aery wilderness" (232) of his own unconscious: "Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells/Startling with careless step the moonlight snake" (235-236). He is specifically associated with the archetypal figure of the accursed wanderer in the following reference to the "Wandering Jew":

O, that God,  
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,  
Lone as incarnate death! (675-681).

He is a version of the Faustian or "Byronic" archetype, for he "drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge and is still insatiate";<sup>28</sup> and he has a typological kinship with Melville's Ahab and Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, for he embarks on the "night sea journey" to meet death:

A restless impulse urged him to embark  
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;  
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves  
The slimy caverns of the populous deep. (304-307).

The poem is usually interpreted as one of unequivocal pessimism because personal death is indeed the end of the journey, and the Narrator, as the voice of consciousness, complains that the "feeble imagery" (709) of the song that the Poet leaves behind is no compensation for the loss of the individual life "which night and time have quenched for ever"



(670) leaving but "pale despair and cold tranquillity" (718).

Nevertheless, whether Shelley consciously recognized them or not, the healing symbols, the symbols of hope that emerge triumphantly in Prometheus Unbound, are here in Alastor in embryonic form. I emphasize again that the greatest threat to the poet is not physical death, but the death of consciousness, the threat of "the abyss," (395). That threat is not realized, for as his boat is driven through the night by a storm, through the "windings of the cavern" (370) and then up "stair above stair" (380) of the "ascending stream" until it pauses "shuddering" on the brink of the "abyss" (394-395), at the critical moment

A wandering stream of wind  
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,  
And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks  
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,  
Beneath a woven grove it sails . . . (397-401).

Having passed the crisis the Poet continues on the stream of life ("Thou imagest my life," 505) into the evening and winter of old age (532-550), where he finally achieves peace in "one silent nook" (572), "a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile/Even in the lap of horror" (577-578). This serene centre, like Endymion's "Cave of Quietude" (Endymion, IV, 548), is, in Jungian symbology, the Self, the final goal of spiritual development.

The poem was a prophecy of Shelley's future development. It is the expression of crisis at the same time that it contains the transforming symbols by means of which the crisis is to be passed. While it is a poem of despair on the conscious level, the symbols rising from the unconscious comprise its healing eschatology. Even the saviour-hero motif that dominates Prometheus Unbound is here in the narrator's comment on the death of the hero, where he implies a hope that the "ruin" of the poet





may be the means by which Death, the brother of Ruin, is "glutted" and may therefore no more require from other men "The unheeded tribute of a broken heart" (618-624).

### III

The Revolt of Islam marks another rite de passage in Shelley's evolution. The poem is the first conscious and deliberate attempt to establish a creative dialectic, symbolized by the opening image of "An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight" (193), between internal and external manifestations of "Necessity," as well as between the conflicting forces within his own psyche. The internal manifestation is his individual genius, which enables him to hear and express the voice of the unconscious, to "expose the open secret,"<sup>29</sup> while the external manifestation is the historical process which produces great cataclysmic movements such as the French Revolution. The dialectic may be seen also as one between individual will and collective effort, for the "Necessity" of Queen Mab has, by the time of the writing of The Revolt of Islam, evolved into a concept of destiny as an end toward which mankind may or may not progress by moral choice.<sup>30</sup> The personal dialectic is between his Muse, or "anima," or "epipsyche," the feminine polarity of his psyche, and his ego-consciousness and "will," the masculine polarity. This dialectic, too, has its external manifestation as the social inter-action between heroic man, Laon, and fully liberated woman, Cythna.

We have Shelley's word that the poem is a conscious attempt to portray his own psychological dynamics. In a letter to Godwin he called it "a genuine picture of my own mind,"<sup>31</sup> and in the Preface he describes



it as "a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind."<sup>32</sup> The very structure of the poem, furthermore, justifies an interpretation of it as a journey to progressively deeper levels of the unconscious. As though starting at the outward rim of a spiral, the poet writes a dedication to an actual woman, his wife, Mary Shelley. Then in the opening passage of the poem proper he describes a vision in which there appears to him a mythic "Woman" (262), who in her turn reveals to the poet a deeper level of vision, that level that Jung refers to as the "collective unconscious," by leading him to a temple whose portals are flanked by "Sculptures like life and thought; immovable, and deep-eyed" (585), and where a "mighty Senate" comprised of "The Great, who had departed from mankind" (605) are seated in state. Here unfolds the tale of Laon and Cythna, which takes us to still deeper levels. The structure may be described as a spiraling series of visions each of which hurls us nearer to the centre.

Shelley is confident now, as he was not when he wrote Alastor, that vision has social value, for its articulation in the symbolic language of mythopoeia tends "to awaken public hope and to enlighten and improve mankind."<sup>33</sup> The serpent image that appeared in Alastor in association with the curse-motif, that is, with the forces that destroy the poet, is now, in The Revolt of Islam, a symbol of a creative revolutionary spirit at work in history, a spirit of which the poet-hero is the agent. He is the "winged youth" whose "radiant brow did wear/The Morning Star" (500-501). The star connects him directly with the fallen Lucifer who "changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild/To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled" (368-369). Laon, the revolutionary, is a





manifestation of the same archetype, with his eyes "dark and deep," and "the clear brow/Which shadowed them . . . like the morning sky" (650-651). His "oracular mind" (655) and "outspread hair" (658), furthermore, connect him with the archetype of the visionary on which I commented in the discussion of Alastor. The hero of the earlier poem may be regarded as the inward-turning, and Laon as the outward-turning, face of the Poet, for Laon is the hero of collective political action, which, as we have seen, is an equally important direction of Shelley's creative energies. Like Shelley, Laon is moved to political action by an understanding of the forces of historical process as they are revealed in the relics of past civilizations, "those scrolls of mortal mystery" (769), by an awareness of the social ills of his own time and nation, where

Tyrants dwelt side by side,  
And stabled in our homes,--until the chain  
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide  
That blasting curse men had no shame--all vied  
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust  
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,  
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,  
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.  
(695-702),

and by a vision of what man "may yet become" (766). He is not, however, any more than Shelley himself was, an advocate of armed insurrection, nor is the poem a celebration of "armed revolution against contemporary European tyrannies,"<sup>34</sup> as it has been called. Rather it is a plea for love and reason in the face of the expedience offered by violence. His main revolutionary weapon, Laon tells his listeners in Canto III, has been rhetoric:

These hopes found words through which my spirit sought  
To weave a bondage of such sympathy,  
As might create some response to the thought





Which ruled me now--and as the vapours lie  
 Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,  
 So were these thoughts invested with the light  
 Of language: and all bosoms made reply  
 On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might  
 Through darkness wide and deep those trancèd  
 spirits smight. (802-810).

Even when he is driven mad by the treachery which deprives him of Cythna, he is persuaded by the Sage who cures him (1459-1467) that "blood need not flow" if he has faith in "the strength of words" (1567-1570) and that "If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice of bonds" (1657). He then returns to the revolutionary camp with an eloquent plea for compassion and forgiveness:

Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,  
 And pain still keener pain for ever breed?  
 We all are brethren--even the slaves who kill  
 For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed  
 On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed  
 With her own broken heart! (1810-1815).

Laon, as the figure representing the hero-poet, marks an important transition in the progress of Shelley's acceptance of his own role as hero-poet in that Laon's visionary power, translated into the rhetoric of revolution, is seen to have evolutionary value. The figure both has a continuity with the "Poet" of Alastor, which, as I have argued, expresses ambivalence to the visionary power, and points forward to Prometheus in whom the "revolution" is internalized. Like Prometheus, Laon is "bound" (1226) and tortured by evil phantoms (1306-1314) when he is separated from Cythna, the principle of love, or his female "emanation" in the Blakean sense, and can fulfil his destiny only in union with her. Indeed the creative inter-action between hero archetype and anima which is so central to the Shelley canon is in some ways more ingeniously presented here than in any other of the works. While in Alastor, the



anima was an elusive phantom who lured the passive youth on a fatal quest, she now shares with him, as an equal, active participation in moral reform. Appearing in Canto I as the mythic "Woman" of the poet's vision, she tells the poet that she has taken on "human form" (432) and entered the "vast and peopled city" (514) to share "in fearless deeds with evil men" (517). She is the unconscious of the poet emerging actively in the world of space and time, no longer turning inward in a regressive and narcissistic direction, but outward to meet its polarity in the creative process to which Jung gives the term the "transcendent function." She is associated with the serpent still, but in its creative capacity, not its destructive capacity as in Alastor, for the serpent coiled in her bosom is the progressive revolutionary force which throughout history has been mistaken for evil (375-376).

The concept of a creative dialectic between polar equals is further elaborated by the "Woman's" account of her own history, which is a version of the Poet's history, as it is presented in Alastor, but with the sexes reversed. She, too, has a solitary past, as an "orphan child" (443); she, too, was nurtured by both books and nature (442-458); she, too, has loved passionately, "not a human lover" (484) but the "winged youth" of a dream vision (500), the masculine counterpart of the "veil'd maid" of Alastor, whose "starry-eyes" appear in the male counterpart as the "Morning Star" on his brow (501). The "Woman," too, then has been fascinated by the mystery of the world of the unconscious, personified by the "animus" figure, "the male personification of the unconscious in woman,"<sup>35</sup> but has not been fatally lured in a regressive direction by it. Rather it "forbade" her "to keep/The path of the sea shore" (511-522), and led her into the thick of the fray, where she was "pierced with





sympathy" (439) by the suffering of the world but was "sustained" by the "Spirit" whom she loved (526-527).

Cythna, the heroine of the tale of the revolutionary lovers, is the human embodiment of the anima and is no doubt intended to be identified with Mary Shelley, to whom the poem is dedicated. Indeed, Mary Shelley, Cythna, and the mythic "Woman" of Canto I are three manifestations of the anima, the source of the revolutionary or "radical" spirit in the human race. In the Dedication the poet pays tribute to the spirit of freedom which Mary represents:

How beautiful and calm and free thou wert  
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain  
Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain  
And walked as free as light the clouds among. (57-60).

Cythna, like Mary, embodies the potential for an emancipated womankind in full political partnership with man, promising Laon that she will lead a full-scale woman's liberation movement on "the appointed day" (1063):

Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,  
Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells  
Will I descend, where'er in abjectness  
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,  
There with the music of thine own sweet spells  
Will disenchant the captives, and will pour  
For the despairing, from the crystal wells  
Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,  
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.  
(1036-1044).

She is an early type of the "epipsyche," and a typological forerunner of Asia. During her captivity and separation from the hero she journeys downward into a realm akin to that of Demogorgon. Taken by an Ethiopian slave



through the green silence of the main  
 Through many a cavern which the eternal flood  
 Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood . . .  
 (2913-2915),

she reaches the ground of being symbolized by a fountain-cave:

"And then," she said, "he laid me in a cave  
 Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,  
 A fountain round and vast, in which the wave  
 Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,  
 Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,  
 Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell  
 Like an hupaithric temple wide and high,  
 Whose aery dome is inaccessible,  
 Was pierced with one round cleft through which the  
 sunbeams fell." (2929-2937).

Here she gives birth to the child who at the end of the poem as the "plumèd Seraph" (4657) pilots "the divine canoe" (4730) in which Laon and Cythna "glide in peace down death's mysterious stream" (4689) to the "Temple of the Spirit" (4815). It is here, too, withdrawn from the external world into the "cave" of her own mind, "one mind the type of all" (3104) that she experiences "glorious fantasies of hope" (3092) for a mankind freed by love. She compares her resurgence of hope to "some odorous violet" which "While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,/ Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise" (3157-3159), or to buds that feel the approach of spring "ere Scythian frost in fear has met/ Spring's messengers descending from the skies" (3160-3162).

When she emerges into the world again she spreads her subversive gospel of love and hope throughout the captive nation:

Ye might arise, and will  
 That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;  
 That love, which none may bind, be free to fill  
 The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary  
 With crime, be quenched and die. (3334-3338).





Cythna's subversive activities prepare the way for the bloodless revolution led by Laon in Canto V. After his victory he encounters her as "a female Shape upon an ivory throne" (2106), suggesting that she is the personification of that power or principle which is "seated on the throne of [his] own soul." She is, furthermore, a veiled form (2115), again suggesting an anima projection, or epipsyche. When, furthermore, the enemy forces rally and re-attack in Canto VI, she rides into the fray on a "black Tartarian horse" (2499)--a well-known symbol in both Freudian and Jungian psychology of libidinous energy--and sweeps Laon away to an ancient and secluded ruin where there occurs an erotic consummation unequalled surely in the whole of literature. Intimations of the characteristically Romantic incest motif--"And such is Nature's law divine that those/Who grow together cannot choose but love" (2686-2687)--suggest an internal union of polarities within a single psyche.

Although Laon and Cythna fail to reform the world, and their attempt culminates in a cruel martyrdom, their heroic life and death ensures the resurgence of the spirit they represent:

This is the winter of the world;--and here  
 We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,  
 Expiring in the frore and foggy air.--  
 Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made  
 The promise of its birth . . . (3685-3689).

They are to be counted among the "Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages" (3714) who, though they perish,

leave  
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,  
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,  
 To be a rule and law to ages that survive.  
 (3717-3720).





The Revolt of Islam represents that stage in Shelley's development when the unconscious as the "eternal feminine," the "anima," the Muse, or the "epipsyche" is coming into full and equal partnership with consciousness and will, and when, further, he is able to submit to the "authority" of the evolutionary process which has made him its agent. The poem is a preparation for the final stage when these relationships will dissolve into "identity," or merge in a totally integrated "human form divine," the figure of the unbound Prometheus.

#### IV

Defiant will as thesis and forgiving love as antithesis achieve a triumphant synthesis in Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus, Shelley's highest transformation of the hero, represents the fully developed and integrated romantic ideal of the androgynous poet-hero who combines the Satan archetype, symbolizing defiance of moral sanctions, ego-assertion and will to power, with the Christ archetype, symbolizing the surrender of the ego to a "higher" or more comprehensive "Self." Prometheus is an appropriate choice of figure to bear the weight of this ideal, because he is both the arch-rebel who defies authority by stealing the divine fire, the symbol of both energy and vision, and the selfless martyr who undergoes personal suffering for the sake of his "beloved race." He therefore integrates the visionary and humanitarian impulses in Shelley himself, and thus represents the poet's full acceptance of his own identity.

Prometheus' kinship with Milton's Satan is suggested by Shelley himself in the Preface. That with Christ is less obvious, but in view of Jung's thesis that Christ and Antichrist are for the western world the



mythic projections of the Self and its "Shadow" (see Chapters III and IV above), it is of the utmost importance to recognize the presence of these archetypes in Shelley's myth.

The Promethean transformation of the hero archetype whose evolution I have traced through Alastor and The Revolt of Islam reveals for Shelley the same "deep truth" that Christ taught and which he represents as a symbolic or "mythic" figure--that the Kingdom of God dwells within and that the only truly liberating revolution is a spiritual regeneration, or rebirth, which transforms the psyche.<sup>36</sup> Love, as a power which transcends the law and frees mankind from its tyranny, and forgiveness, which transcends justice, are the revealed truths of both the Christian myth and Shelley's myth. Prometheus is freed from Jupiter's tyranny by forgiving him: that is, by replacing hatred and revenge with love and compassion, so that, having been made wise by suffering, he wishes "no living thing to suffer pain" (I, 305). Loving self-sacrifice in its various manifestations is celebrated in Act I by the Chorus of Spirits, who sing of the archetypal act as it is re-enacted by sailor, scholar and poet (708-751). Prometheus is referred to by the Chorus (I, 692-707) as the beginning and the end of the prophecy of Love (as Christ is the Alpha and Omega<sup>37</sup>). Love is again celebrated in Asia's apocalyptic account of man's fall in Act II, where Prometheus is specifically identified as the saviour who alleviates man's despair by bringing hope and love into the world:

Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes  
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,  
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,  
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings  
The shape of Death; and Love be sent to bind  
The disunited tendrils of that vine  
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart. (II, iv, 59-65).





Later in the same scene, in the dialogue between Asia and Demogorgon about the identity and nature of ultimate power, Demogorgon makes a specific reference to the supremacy of Love:

If the abysm  
 Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice  
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;  
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze  
 On the revolving world? What to bid speak  
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these  
 All things are subject but eternal Love. (II, iv, 115-120).

As Grabo notes, the doctrine of love and forgiveness gives a dimension to the figure of Prometheus which is missing from the original Greek figure: "In his forgiveness of Jupiter, Prometheus by his compassion destroys the evil which hatred and defiance could not destroy. Philosophical and ethical meanings foreign to Greek thought clothe the fable in a new dress. The ethics of Christ is fused with the metaphysics of Plato."<sup>38</sup>

Although Shelley's Prometheus bears the name of his Greek predecessor, the myth of which the poet has made him the hero is much more than an old fable in a new dress. It is rather a radical revelation of the "deep truth" to which Demogorgon refers in the passage quoted above, and which has revealed itself throughout history in variations on a single mythic structure, the "monomyth." Although the term is not Shelley's, the concept is, as Wasserman has pointed out. In commenting on Shelley's reference to "that great poem which all poets, like the cooperating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world,"<sup>39</sup> Wasserman says:

. . . according to the implications of Shelley's theory the myths that appear in his poetry, however traditional, are to be understood as really having no inherited contexts at all. As either actually or potentially true-beautiful organizations of thought, they are universal and eternal forms that become limited in proportion as they are thought of as specific



myths; and any particular previous appearance of the myth is not a locus for literary allusion but merely another instance of the real or potential archetypal form.<sup>40</sup>

Shelley's own aesthetics, then, provides the justification for a "typological" investigation--to be distinguished from "source-hunting"--of the parallels between his hero-type and Christ, the hero-type who has dominated western culture for two thousand years. Like Christ, Prometheus is both a god and the suffering champion of mankind; he is "nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain" (I, 20), as Christ is nailed to the Cross, the location in both cases being versions of "the Cosmic Mountain"<sup>41</sup> which appears universally, according to Eliade, as one of the symbols for the Centre of the World. Both heroes experience physical and psychological suffering: although Prometheus' entrails are being devoured by a vulture, his greatest pain comes from "the ghastly people of the realm of dream" (I, 37) who come to mock him, just as Christ's greatest pain is not physical crucifixion but the illusion of separation from God expressed in the words, "Father, father, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

An analogy between Prometheus and Christ, furthermore, is implied in a key passage in Act I, where the Furies present to the hero a vision of Christ as an emblem of defeat and failure, the intention apparently being to tempt Prometheus to doubt the value of his own chosen role as mankind's champion:

One came forth of gentle worth  
Smiling on the sanguine earth;  
His words outlived him like swift poison  
Withering up truth, peace and pity.  
Look! where round the wide horizon  
Many a million-peopled city  
Vomits smoke in the bright air.  
Hear that outcry of despair!





'Tis his mild and gentle ghost  
 Wailing for the faith he kindled:  
 Look again, the flames almost  
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:  
 The survivors round the embers  
 Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy!  
 Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,  
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread  
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.  
 (I, 546-563).

In the choruses which follow, the "bloody agony" flowing from the "white and quivering brow" (I, 565) of Christ, "a youth/With patient looks nailed to a crucifix" (I, 585-586), is identified both with the agony of mankind in the throes of revolution and with the agony of Prometheus, "the soul of man" (III, i, 5). In a context which ironically perverts the original meaning, the Furies taunt Prometheus with the very words of Christ's prayer for forgiveness of his enemies' abuse of him, "They know not what they do." Spoken by the Furies the words are a cynical comment on a world unawakened from the primordial darkness of ignorance and insensitivity. They vanish, however, together with their vision, when they fail to provoke in Prometheus the expected hatred and despair (I, 633).

The pattern of redemption through the suffering and sacrifice of the one for the many, and the merging of the figure of suffering human victim with that of divine redeemer, a pattern which, we have seen, reaches its most fully developed form in the myth of Christ, is reflected in Shelley's Prometheus as a "post-figuration." The greater part of Act I is devoted to a portrayal of the suffering of Prometheus, who has willingly chosen to submit to various forms of torment, both physical and psychological, rather than come to terms with the Oppressor. The purpose of his suffering, as of Christ's, is to free "his beloved race"





(386) from "the death-seal of captivity" (397); the one sacrifices himself for the many. Prometheus' identification of himself as Redeemer is explicit at the end of Act I:

I would fain  
Be what it is my destiny to be,  
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,  
Or sink into the original gulf of things. (I, 815-818).

In her discussion of Prometheus Unbound in Archetypal Patterns in Poetry Maud Bodkin remarks thus on the sacrificial element in the analogy:

The mystic relation between the suffering and victorious love of Prometheus and the healing of the world is the same relation that thrills us in the words concerning the suffering servant of Isaiah--the chastisement of our peace was upon him--or in the saying of Christ: I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself.<sup>42</sup>

Most other critics, while aware of the analogy, stress the human rather than divine side of Prometheus. Butter, for example, sees him merely as a human soul who "saves himself" by co-operating with divine forces. Butter is typical of those critics who fail to understand the full significance of Shelley's hero because the dimensions of the figure as a "type" elude him:

It is Christian in its emphasis on love and forgiveness, and in this its morality is higher than that of the Greeks. If, however, Prometheus is taken, as I think he must be, not as the divine friend of man, but as the representative of man or of the best in man himself, then it seems opposed to Christianity to say that man saves himself. Yet, however much theologians may stress the importance of grace and the powerlessness of man by himself, it is agreed that there must be a free act of the will to co-operate with grace. Prometheus in Act I makes an act of repentance . . . so casts evil from his mind and so brings into action forces greater than himself; for he does not himself take any further direct part in what subsequently happens. This is congruous with the Christian idea of the individual soul willing to cooperate with grace and so bringing into play forces beyond himself. The poem is more nearly compatible with Christian theology than Shelley perhaps intended or realized.<sup>43</sup>

"Christian theology," nevertheless, tends to perpetuate the dichotomy



between individual will and "grace," a dichotomy which for Shelley is transcended in "identity." Prometheus does not merely "co-operate" with grace. He embodies it. He is grace in the sense that "God (Christ) is love." Although Grabo does not specifically make such an identification he implies the merging of the Redeemer and the redeemed in one figure in his insistence that Prometheus (the One) is both mankind and the benefactor of mankind.

Dramatically Prometheus is the liberator of humanity from the tyranny of Jupiter; yet Prometheus is also humanity itself. . . . The duality of this conception is perhaps more intelligible if Prometheus is thought of as a personification of the racial will of mankind, its power to endure and defy its own evil creation, a kind of deathless super-soul greater than its mortal constituents . . . .<sup>44</sup>

Jupiter, as man's "own evil creation," represents all those forces within the individual, including his concept of an authoritative father-God, that repress and inhibit individual will and creative love, that is, the repressive forces to which Freud gave the term super-ego and which he directly associated with the parents. In the Jungian school the father imago in particular has come to represent the controlling forces. The task of the World Redeemer, whether he wears the face of Christ or Prometheus, is, according to Campbell, "to slay the tenacious aspect of the father (dragon, tester, ogre king) and release from its ban the vital energies that will feed the universe."<sup>45</sup> Quoting from Coomaraswamy's Hinduism and Buddhism Campbell continues:

This [the deed of the hero] can be done either in accordance with the Father's will or against his will; he [the Father] may "choose death for his children's sake," or it may be that the Gods impose the passion upon him, making him their sacrificial victim. These are not contradictory doctrines, but different ways of telling one and the same story; in reality, Slayer and Dragon, sacrificer and victim, are of one mind behind the scenes, where there is no polarity of contraries, but mortal enemies on the stage, where the everlasting war of the God and the Titans is displayed.<sup>46</sup>







The everlasting war is waged between the generations, between the old order and the new, between the established or "set-fast" as Campbell calls it, or "inertia deified," as Frye calls it, "the unthinking acceptance of what is there because it is there,"<sup>47</sup> and the force of change. Jupiter as "the tenacious aspect of the father" is described by Bodkin thus:

Jupiter, within the myth, is felt as . . . a tyranny established in the far past of the individual or the race by the spirit of a man upon himself and his world, a tyranny that, till it can be overthrown, holds him straightened and tormented, disunited from his own creative energies. . . . He is a power maintaining values once recognized but now outworn, inimical to the needs of the developing mind.<sup>48</sup>

Grabo also comments on this aspect of the figure:

Man is the victim of his past, not only of his evil deeds but of his best ideals, for these too become inadequate . . . . The evil in Jupiter is that he persists, that he survives the need of his creation yet is not easily destroyed.<sup>49</sup>

The son's task as the carrier of change is to overcome this aspect of the Father, as Christ, according to Shelley, opposed a moral code that, by assuming the existence of a power that punishes the vicious and rewards the virtuous, had "enslaved mankind for ages."<sup>50</sup>

Two of Shelley's critics see the relationship between Jupiter and Prometheus as embodying the conflict that exists in the father-son relationship even in the Christian myth; for Christ, as the representative of freedom and love, cannot at the same time be an incarnation of an authoritative and revengeful God who demands "atonement." Wilson Knight in The Christian Renaissance has this to say:

Shelley's Prometheus Unbound evolves a theology in personal terms, thereby challenging a direct comparison with Christian symbolism. Prometheus is mankind or mankind's champion, suffering under Jupiter, a god cruel, stupid, and evil. Prometheus corresponds to God the Son, and Jupiter to



God the Father in so far, but only in so far as he is in conflict with the Son. . . . Prometheus is Christ, or mankind at its best; Jupiter corresponds to Satan or the Satanic attributes of the Father . . . .<sup>51</sup>

William Marshall, in an article entitled "The Father-Child Symbolism in Prometheus Unbound," advances a more complex interpretation, suggesting that, in order to get around the "paradox" created by the identification of Christ with the Son of God, Shelley has split the traditional Christ figure between Prometheus, the human and benevolent champion of mankind, and Demogorgon, "the fatal child" (III, i, 19) and "the incarnation" (III, i, 46), through whom Jupiter hopes to impose his will on mankind. Since the notion of a deity who would go to such anthropomorphically ingenious lengths to subject man's will to his own is inconsistent with Christ's gospel of all-forgiving and liberating love, "Christ, the benevolent champion, falsely identified with the Son of God, must destroy the notion of the Father in the mind of Man in order to vindicate his own humanity and goodness."<sup>52</sup> It is precisely in this way that Prometheus, by ejecting from his being, that is, from "the soul of man," the hatred that Jupiter personifies, destroys "the notion" of Jupiter and becomes both the embodiment and the symbol of the Love taught by Christ.

Just as Prometheus, as a new manifestation of Christ, is Shelley's highest transformation of the hero archetype, so Asia as "co-redemptress" is the highest transformation of the anima figure, or "epipsyche," and if it is fair to say that Mary and her typological descendants, such as Dante's Beatrice and Goethe's Gretchen, fill the role of epipsyche in the Christian myth, then Asia can be identified with her.<sup>53</sup> Indeed all three Mary's of the Christian myth can be found in Shelley's drama. The other two, Ione and Panthea, are even seated at the feet of Prometheus, in the opening scene in which he is "bound to a Precipice," like the two











primal power, the "oracular vapour," which enables Asia to articulate and answer the questions for herself: ". . . of such truths/Each to itself must be the oracle" (II, iv, 122-123). Demogorgon's evasive answers merely suggest the source within herself where the answers are to be sought. Demogorgon becomes articulate only when he<sup>56</sup> has lost his objective status, when he has been hurled with Jupiter back into the "abyss" (II, i, 54) of Prometheus' own subjective consciousness, or as Frye has it, "back to the human imagination that gave birth to him."<sup>57</sup> Then as mythos re-integrated with logos he proclaims to the whole cosmos the victorious consummation of love and will (IV, 554-578).

Prometheus is the culmination and synthesis of the radical ideals of heroism which Shelley strove to realize in his own development and toward which he hoped the human race would evolve. As "a type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature" he reveals "the open secret," or "deep truth," that the transformation of humanity unfolds with the transformation of the individual, and that this transformation is one in which the conflicting polarities achieve a healing and creative dialectic between love and will, between vision and action, between masculine and feminine, so that man is no longer in conflict with enemies of his own creation, and is therefore no longer divided against himself.



## PART FOUR: KEATS





## CHAPTER IX

### THE POET AS "SOUL-MAKER"

John Keats, representing a transformation of the hero-poet that goes beyond even Shelley, is the most modern of the Romantic literary figures. While Prometheus represents the ideal of liberation through love, or "imagination," from man-made moral law, Shelley could never free himself from the moral "necessity" to reform the rest of mankind: in his own heroic struggle, therefore, he embodied the phase in the psycho-evolution of the hero that Neumann calls that of the culture-bringer,<sup>1</sup> the redeemer and saviour, who discovers, and broadcasts to the world through the medium of language, the spiritual values of knowledge and wisdom. Keats represents a still more radical transformation of the hero archetype. The combined evidence of the symbolism of his poetry, and his prose statements regarding the inner "sensations" he experienced, reveals a growing awareness that the ultimate goal of creative effort for the poet as man is self-understanding through suffering, the process he called "soul-making."

This awareness emerged from the characteristically Romantic conflict, which I discussed earlier, between a sense of responsibility to tradition<sup>2</sup> and the evolutionary drive toward a radical individuality. In his early development as a poet Keats passed through phases of idolatrous veneration for Shakespeare and Milton in turn, a veneration that influenced his early emphasis on the quality of "Negative Capability,"<sup>3</sup> a concept which has inspired much misguided criticism of Keats. It is clear even in the letter in which he uses the term that he



is already preoccupied with the qualities that make a poet and hence with his own "identity" as a poet. His very insistence earlier that "Men of Genius . . . have not any individuality,"<sup>4</sup> and, in another letter, that a Poet has "no Identity,"<sup>5</sup> betray his own self-consciousness, and as soon as a poet becomes self-conscious about his identity or his "role," he has already, for all his admiration of them, lost the objectivity of a Shakespeare or a Milton. The only path then left to him is to use poetry as a vehicle for exploring the problem of identity itself: that is, to advance in the direction already indicated by Wordsworth.

In the section of this paper devoted to Wordsworth I have already drawn attention to Keats' growing admiration for the elder poet, who had explored the "dark Passages" of the soul and exposed the "heart and nature of Man."<sup>6</sup> This admiration indicates the radical direction of Keats' own development as a poet, for he, too, was becoming aware, on a still more self-conscious level than Wordsworth, that poetry is an exercise in self-discovery. His development in this direction culminates in the most important psychological and aesthetic prose statement which Keats ever made, the journal letter he wrote to his brother George and his wife in the spring of 1819, just before the composition of the great May odes. In this letter he describes the very process to which Jung has given the term "individuation." Keats defines the "Soul" as "Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity," and "Soul making" as the process by which intelligences "acquire identities," or by which each individual soul becomes "personally itself."<sup>7</sup> His use of the word "identity" six times in the same paragraph<sup>8</sup> reveals how far he has come from "Negative Capability" and from his initial condemnation of Wordsworth for his self-consciousness. He has now found a new deity





worthy of worship, he tells his brother, a "heathen goddess" whom he is too "orthodox" to neglect.<sup>9</sup> He then includes in the letter his latest poem, "the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains."<sup>10</sup> It is the "Ode to Psyche," and the new deity is his own soul. Ironic vibrations in his use of the words "heathen" and "orthodox," furthermore, betray an awareness, just on the threshold of consciousness, that he is on radical ground indeed. (The full terror of it has yet to confront him in the figure of Moneta.) In the same letter he implies that poetry, being "not so fine a thing as philosophy," has value only insofar as it serves "philosophy," or the pursuit of truth, confessing that his own "young writing" is a "straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness."<sup>11</sup> His rhetorical "Do you not think I strive--to know myself?"<sup>12</sup> implies, furthermore, that the knowledge that poetry serves as its end is self-knowledge.

The same letter is the culmination of a dynamic and organic unfolding, which can be traced throughout the earlier letters, of Keats' theory of the Imagination. To ignore chronology in this respect, as many anthologies of Romantic criticism tend to do, is misleading to the point of falsifying the very nature of Keats' mature poetics, for his early unconditional faith in the power of the Imagination to reveal "Beauty & Truth"<sup>13</sup> is gradually tempered by an increasingly agonizing confrontation of his own imagination with his concrete "experience" of life. In November, 1817, just as he was finishing Endymion (a work for which the mature craftsman of 1820 had little respect),<sup>14</sup> he wrote:

I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination--What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth. . . . The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream--he awoke and found it truth.<sup>15</sup>





In the same context he cries "O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!"<sup>16</sup> By "sensations" he means the internal experiences resulting from the unconscious processes taking place just beneath the threshold of consciousness: that is, the dynamic processes of the imagination which have not yet become "thoughts." However, although he expresses a preference for the "Life of Sensations," he has a prophetic awareness of his own naiveté in the choice, for his reference to a "complex Mind--one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits"<sup>17</sup> suggests an already developing dialectic between "sensation" and "thought" in his own psyche.

His emerging awareness of the limits of the power of the Imagination to reveal truth independent of a confrontation with reason and conscious experience is revealed in two letters he wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds early in 1818. In the first of these, a "poetical letter," he speaks of a "God of Song" who carries his soul aloft and creates a "terrible division" between his soul and body, a "division" which may be the "cause of Madness." He pleads, therefore, with the God to allow his power to be curbed by "staid Philosophy."<sup>18</sup> Two months later, in the "Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds,"<sup>19</sup> the reason for his distrust of the God's unlimited power becomes more explicitly apparent: Vision, personified in the earlier letter as the "God of the Meridian," reveals not only the "Enchanted Castle" (26) and the "golden galley all in silken trim" (56) but also the "Shark at savage prey,--the hawk at pounce" (103). The imagination which he had so confidently associated with Truth and Beauty now reveals its dark side as an "eternal fierce destruction" (97). Indeed, "brought/Beyond its proper bourn" (78-79), that is, untempered by "staid Philosophy," the imagination is a "flaw/In happiness" (82-83): it



"spoils the singing of the nightingale" (85).

As the reality of the mortal world begins to bear down on him, the world of "circumstance" as he repeatedly calls it, he begins to awaken to its value. Between the "Epistle to Reynolds" and the soul-making letter of March, 1819, he experienced separation from one brother, the illness and death of another, frustration both in love and in his profession,<sup>20</sup> and the threat of death by consumption. Such traumas, according to his own "system of salvation," constitute the process by which an Intelligence is transformed into a Soul. The "world of Circumstances" is not "a vale of tears," he insists, but a "vale of Soul-making."<sup>21</sup> "Nothing ever becomes real," he declares, "till it is experienced--Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it."<sup>22</sup>

## II

Keats' poetry, then, and his "experience" must be read in conjunction, the one a revelation of the meaning of the experience, the other an illustration of what is revealed. Together they enact the dynamic process of self-realization. Some of Keats' more alert critics recognize the interpretative possibilities inherent in such a notion. Elizabeth Sewall calls his poetry "a commentary on the allegorical life."<sup>23</sup> Bate speaks of a "real-life myth" characterized by "the simple motif of the orphan of folklore."<sup>24</sup> Dorothy Van Ghent regards the poet, as he is manifest in his poetry, as a Dionysian hero struggling toward the Apollonian ideal,<sup>25</sup> and Irene Chayes interprets the poetry as conveying a series of struggles on the part of the poet to become a poet.<sup>26</sup> The





only full-scale attempt, however, to interpret the total canon as an organic unit revealing a process of self-realization is that of Katherine Wilson, in The Nightingale and the Hawk, who insists on a "fantastic correspondence"<sup>27</sup> between Keats' poetry and aspects of Jungian psychology, and to whom I am heavily indebted in my reading of the poetry.

Although Miss Wilson does not deal with it at any length, Sleep and Poetry, written in 1816 before Keats made up his mind to abandon medicine in favour of poetry, charts the course of his future development as a poet and contains the germs of his mature poetics. The very title of the poem, as well as his explicit tribute to "Sleep"--"For what there may be worthy in these rhymes/I partly owe to him" (349-350)--suggests an as yet unapprehended relationship between the writing of poetry and the activity experienced by the mind on the threshold of sleep, the relationship which is again the theme of his last major work, The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream, in which the words "dreams" and "sleep" occur within the first three lines. This motif, then, brings us back full circle from the later work to the earlier one, revealing an organic consistency in the poet's intuition into the nature of creativity.

Already in the early poem, the poet betrays a prophetic awareness that his own development will follow the organic, rhythmic pattern of open-ended, infinite becoming that manifests itself in the cycle of nature, for he introduces his life-plan with a series of figures suggesting nature's "becoming" arrested in the eternal moment, much like the images on the Grecian Urn:

Stop and consider! life is but a day;  
A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way  
From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep  
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep



Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?  
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;  
 The reading of an ever-changing tale;  
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;  
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;  
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,  
 Riding the springy branches of an elm. (85-95).

The poet then goes on to convey, in a series of archetypal symbols, the dialectic between vision and reality, between sleep and the "wakeful anguish of the soul," which, as we have seen, is expressed in the metaphysics of the letters. As a preparation for "the deed/That my own soul has to itself decreed" (97-98) he will first allow himself to be lured into the inner world of phantasy by a "white-handed nymph" who will "entice" him "on, and on" (105-117)

Till in the bosom of a leafy world  
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd  
 In the recesses of a pearly shell. (119-121).

Phantasy, however, which creates an enclosed Eden of personal desire fulfilled, symbolized by the shell,<sup>28</sup> is not the faculty that ultimately creates sublime poetry. The more worthy inspiration is represented by "a car/And steeds with streamy manes" (126-127). This is the vehicle in which he will "Wheel downward" (131) and "still downward" (133) to the realm of "collective," or universal, suffering, to the "agonies, the strife of human hearts" (124-125), where "Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear" pass through a "dusky space" (138-139). The "shapes" will appear again as "the huge cloudy symbols" of "When I Have Fears," and the charioteer will appear again, first as Endymion and then as Hyperion.

The "deed" assigned to the poet by destiny, or by his "own soul" is to "know/All that he [the charioteer] writes with such a hyrrying glow" (153-154). It is the visionary's divinely ordained responsibility to





return to the fully conscious state, to awaken, bringing the vision with him into the empirical world of "real things" which now "comes doubly strong,/And, like a muddy stream, would bear along/My soul to nothingness" (157-159). The task of "poet kings," the young poet intuitively but does not yet fully understand, is self-realization and self-creation through an infinite rhythmic inter-action between the sleeping and the waking states, between the death and rebirth of consciousness. This is the "end and aim of Poesy" (293). The poet's visual image for this "unapprehended inspiration," to borrow Shelley's phrase, is a "quaternio" comprised of the fourfold year divided by a cross:

thence too I've seen  
The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear  
As any thing most true; as that the year  
Is made of the four seasons---manifest  
As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,  
Lifted to the white clouds. (292-297).

Having experienced a vision of his own future and of the future of poetry, the poet "awakens" to the "reality" of the objects in the room in Hunt's cottage where he lay when the inspiration for the poem first came to him, but these very objects are now experienced against their archetypal background, the poem concluding with a reference to the portrait of Petrarch and Laura. The lovers, between whom "shone/The face of Poesy" (393-394), function as a culminating archetypal symbol of the creative synthesis of psychic polarities, out of which rises the artist's creation. He leaves it upon its completion, "as a father does his son" (404). In his conscious waking state he has "fathered" the poem, the mother of which is the unconscious, the level of the psyche which is activated during "Sleep." In Art and the Unconscious John Thorburn describes in metaphysical terms the dialectic between the mental states





which Keats intuited very early in his career as constituting the creative process, that is, the inter-action between "conscious idea" and "phantasy." "Selective meditation" or "conscious idea," says Thorburn, stimulates "phantasy," which in turn elaborates and enlightens the conscious idea. The process itself is then revealed in "the intellectual form" of language:

We might regard it, then, as if there were a rhythm--consciousness, the unconscious of dreaming, return to consciousness. . . . The artist, with his intellectual or moral orientation goes off upon his artistic quest, passes into the unconsciousness of his art, and wakes up again when the finished product leaves his hand.<sup>29</sup>

Endymion is another early attempt by the poet to understand the dynamics of his self-realization as poet. Katherine Wilson calls it an exploration of the unconscious in "a quest for the Self."<sup>30</sup> Bate speaks of its "confessional" nature, suggesting that it is an exercise in "self-understanding,"<sup>31</sup> a preparation for the "heart's debate with actuality."<sup>32</sup> Keats himself referred to the poem as "a regular stepping of the Imagination towards a truth," and to the "Argument" as being of "the greatest service to me of anything I ever did."<sup>33</sup> Like the hero of Alastor, Endymion is both a projection of the poem's creator at the stage of development which produced it and a prophetic vision of his future development, but while, again like the hero of Alastor, Endymion is endangered by the fascination of the ideal, the attraction is not a fatal one. Indeed, it is only by succumbing to the lure of the vision, by surrendering consciousness to the fascination of the images emerging from the unconscious, that he can reach the healing power which enables him to return to his people and fulfil his social responsibilities.

At the opening of the tale both Endymion's present well-being



and his future as a leader are endangered by a strange lassitude (I, 178-184) which prevents active participation in the affairs of the community. The cause is a "dream within dream" (I, 633) which he has experienced during a poppy-induced sleep. The moon, personified as an inexpressibly beautiful woman, takes his hand (I, 636) and leads him through "frightful eddies" (I, 648) and into "huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side" (I, 650). Before achieving consummation with her he is "O'er-power'd" by sleep (I, 671) and loses the vision, but the brief glimpse of the ideal he has experienced drives him on a compulsive quest to achieve a "fellowship with essence" (I, 779), a quest that takes him deeper and deeper into "the hollow,/The silent mysteries of earth" (II, 213-214) and into "the fearful deep" that he might "hide his head/From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness" (II, 217-218). He is saved from "madness" not, paradoxically, by withdrawing from the descent, but rather by surrendering to the "deep abyss," for only by so doing can he reach the "orbed diamond," the treasure hard to attain at the centre of his soul. Because the subsequent return to the "habitual self" (II, 276) of "consciousness" (II, 283) is unwelcome, he pleads with Diana to allow him to return to her realm (II, 303-332), and this time descends

Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,  
Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell  
Through unknown things. (II, 661-663).

Eventually he reaches those "Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,/Streams subterranean tease their granite beds" (II, 601-602). This is the realm of "The Mothers,"<sup>34</sup> of which Keats' symbol is Cybele, the mother of the gods (II, 639-650). Here the hero achieves consummation with the ideal beloved, only to be again thrust back to consciousness, bringing with him, however, the insight that the "golden fruit" which the





poet lifts "Into the bloom of heaven" (II, 908-909) is nourished by the "muddy lees"<sup>35</sup> (II, 906) of unconscious processes.

A still deeper level of the unconscious is represented by the Glaucus myth in Book III. Endymion is now in "the deep, deep water-world" (III, 101) of the ocean, and although the protective influence of the "anima" is still felt, he becomes aware of an attraction from another source (III, 183-187):

For as he lifted up his eyes to swear  
How his own goddess was past all things fair,  
He saw far in the concave green of the sea  
An old man sitting calm and peacefully. (III, 189-192).

M.-L. von Franz tells us in "The Process of Individuation":

If an individual has wrestled seriously enough and long enough with the anima problem so that he is no longer partially identified with it, the unconscious again changes its dominant character and appears in a new symbolical form, representing the Self, the innermost nucleus of the psyche. . . . In the case of a man, it manifests itself as a masculine initiator and guardian (an Indian guru), a wise old man, a spirit of nature . . . .<sup>36</sup>

The parallel between the experiences of Glaucus and Endymion implies that Glaucus is an ancient version of Endymion himself, doomed to oblivion in the depths of the collective unconscious unless he is released by "a youth elect" (III, 710). Together, as "twin brothers" (III, 713), they will restore to life the pairs of lovers buried in an under-water tomb. The "vision" or insight necessary for the task comes from Glaucus: it is he who "explores all forms and substances/Straight homeward to their symbol-essences" (III, 690-700). But it is the arrival of "A youth by heavenly power lov'd and led" (III, 708) which makes heroic action possible, culminating in the triumphant wedding procession through the rainbow arch and golden gate of Neptune's palace (III, 828-865).



Having experienced a vision of the archetypal realm on its deepest level, Endymion is now capable of returning to consciousness, of obeying the command of the goddess to "awake" (IV, 1027) without losing touch with the visionary realm. Now he can experience an earthly love, encompassing sorrow as well as joy, against its archetypal background. By surrendering his "self-passion or identity" (IV, 477) to the longing for love of a fellow mortal, the Indian Maid, he achieves his own longed-for union with the immortal Cynthia. While the hero and his mortal love are carried into sleep on the wings of a pair of raven steeds (IV, 404), he dreams that he embraces his goddess and awakens to find it true, for she and the Indian Maid are one.

The boon that as a young sage he could impart to his people is the wisdom to see through the veil of empirical experience. What is behind the veil constitutes the healing secret that he would "confide" to his "shepherd realm" (IV, 863-864). The ambiguity as to whether he fulfils this destiny, however, is a reflection of Keats' own early ambivalence toward his role as "seer."



## CHAPTER X

### HYPERION AND THE QUEST FOR THE "SELF"

#### I

The two Hyperion poems stand at the beginning and at the end, respectively, of the period of Keats' most rapid development as both man and artist, the first written in the autumn of 1818, while he was nursing his dying brother, the second almost a year later, after he had experienced considerable emotional suffering and when his own physical health was seriously declining. The unhappy biographical circumstances of the composition of the Hyperion fragments forced upon the poet the early maturity to which we are indebted for his greatest work. Through but a few months can be traced, in a condensed form, a process that usually takes a full lifetime to fulfil, the process of soul-making which Keats regarded as the only system of salvation that "does not affront our reason and humanity."<sup>1</sup> Keats' life-long concern with this process is enough justification for interpreting the poems as a record of the poet's quest for identity. According to Jung and his school, furthermore, the poet is the intuitive herald of new levels of consciousness in the race. His individual development, therefore, as I have emphasized repeatedly, has, insofar as it is manifested in his art, typological or transpersonal significance. The creative evolution of the poet as representative man is a "type" of the creative evolution of the race.

That Keats believed in creative evolution is evident from one of the letters to Reynolds already quoted in the preceding chapter. In comparing Milton and Wordsworth and their respective historical milieus





he suggests that Milton "did not think into the heart as Wordsworth has done," because his genius represented an earlier stage in "the general and gregarious advance of intellect," or what he calls later in the same letter "the grand march of intellect." He then goes on to speak of "a mighty Providence that subdues the mightiest minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human knowledge or religion."<sup>2</sup> This same doctrine of a providential process is expressed in Hyperion in the words of Oceanus, who tries to convince the other Titans of the inevitability of their fall, explaining the law of Nature by which each race of beings and the values for which they stand must give way to a superior race and a superior set of values:

We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
Of thunder, or of Jove. . . . .  
. . . . .  
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;  
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
In will, in action free, companionship,  
And thousand other signs of purer life;  
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
And fated to excel us, as we pass  
In glory that old Darkness . . . (II, 181-215).

The rise and fall of ancient mythical orders of power was Keats' metaphor for the shifting dynamics of his own psyche as he struggled to fulfil his destiny as poet-hero before the early death that he anticipated.

Apart from Endymion, with which Keats himself was dissatisfied and which is unanimously considered the product of an immature talent, the only attempts he made to write a mythic narrative about heroic figures are the Hyperion fragments. His failure to complete either



tells us more about the nature of the artist and of the creative process than his success would have done.

The first fragment is closer in style to Endymion, in spite of the poet's intention to treat his theme "in a more naked and grecian Manner,"<sup>3</sup> than his later attempt to reconstruct the poem in the form of a vision. We know from his letters and from his Preface to Endymion that he had the plan for Hyperion in mind while he was still finishing Endymion, that he wanted "to try once more, before I bid it farewell" to touch "the beautiful mythology of Greece."<sup>4</sup> His failure to carry out his plan to its conclusion may have been a growing frustration with the traditional symbolic equipment which had served him well enough for "a first-born song" (Endymion, IV, 773) but which was no longer adequate for revealing the deeper layers of his emerging identity. The two fragments he has left us, however, constitute the record of his quest for a heroic figure to serve this purpose.

Like his romantic contemporaries he was in his quest led backward through the history of racial consciousness to its earliest beginnings, to the primordial, monolithic structures which, according to Jung, are engraved on the deepest layers of the psyche and which emerge throughout history in the symbolic vocabulary of myth and mythopoeic poetry. While Blake was widely eclectic in his assimilation of traditional symbolic vocabulary,<sup>5</sup> Keats, like Shelley, tried to revitalize the western myth of the hero. In an essay entitled "Keats' Myth of the Hero," Dorothy Van Ghent argues that Keats' poetry follows the pattern of the traditional hero myth of western culture:

The dramatic unity of Keats' poetry, considered as a body of work, exists in the adventure of a hero who is afflicted with a feverish "strife of





opposites," and who, for an otherworldly love, descends underground (or ascends pinnacles), is magically healed of his fever, and wins immortality or "identity." . . . This myth inherits its deep binding power and its richness of suggestion from archaic sources which we must surely think of as representing common and permanently real motions of the psyche, motions that have found certain ritual figures satisfyingly expressive and allowing of endless original elaborations.<sup>6</sup>

The "strife of opposites" to which she refers is that between the Dionysian hero, representing process as a creative principle, the principle which the poet himself embodies, and the Apollonian hero, representing the ideal of homeostatic "identity,"<sup>7</sup> that is, the immortality which transcends flux and process, and which, she believes, was the goal of Keats' quest. His failure to synthesize the two principles in a single heroic figure may, it is implied, explain his dissatisfaction with, and his unwillingness to proceed with, either of the fragments.

The *Hyperion* poems, particularly the first one, may be considered also to comprise a version of the myth of the fall. The notion that the state of mortality may be seen as a loss of godhead is common to myth, and is a basic theme of *Hyperion*. The plight of his fallen Titan sons as described by Coelus is an effective metaphor for the human condition:

Divine ye were created, and divine  
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,  
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled:  
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;  
Actions of rage and passion; even as  
I see them on the mortal world beneath,  
In men who die.--This is the grief, O Son!  
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!

As Evert observes, "The point is not merely that the gods have fallen, but that the change in condition is a change of kind, which in turn, implies an unbridgeable gulf between the mortal and the divine."<sup>8</sup>

In spite of Keats' intention, therefore, to compose a poem which



was to be a tale of a mighty hero who "being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one,"<sup>9</sup> the mood which prevails in the poem is, in fact, one of impotence and despair against which neither Hyperion nor Apollo is effectual. Neither figure is a satisfactory symbol of heroic identity, Hyperion because the very power which gives him heroic stature is derived from the cyclic dynamics of the rise and fall of gods, making his own fall imminent, and Apollo because his "knowledge" produces a tragic and passive, rather than a redeeming, vision of life. Ironically, the very tension which served Keats as an artist and upon which the structure of his greatest poetry depends, that between Dionysian process and Apollonian stasis, produced the identity crisis that arrested the progress of the Hyperion myth.

Here, as in his most characteristic poetry, that of the Odes and The Eve of Saint Agnes, he begins with images of stasis, or death-in-life, ventures toward the centre of the whirling Dionysian vortex, and then recoils to the safety of the circumference. Compare, for example, the opening of Hyperion with the "Ode to a Grecian Urn" and the first two stanzas of The Eve of Saint Agnes. The initial images in all three are those of a "cold pastoral." In Hyperion "gray-hair'd Saturn" sits "quiet as a stone/Still as the silence round about his lair" (I, 4-5); this is followed by an accumulation of images conveying the stillness and lifelessness of "natural sculpture in cathedral cavern" (I, 86). The "cathedral cavern" and the "frozen God" (I, 87) have a direct identity with the cold chapel at the opening of The Eve of Saint Agnes, in which "The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze" (14). In the two completed works aesthetic objectivity enables the poet to journey into the Dionysian whirlpool of "mad pursuit" and "wild ecstasy" and return





to the marble circumference "unravish'd," because his identity is not threatened. Since, however, the *Hyperion* poems are "quest" poems in which his own identity is at stake, the poet himself is threatened with either the petrification which has overtaken Saturn, and the lovers on the Urn, or with the equally terrifying possibility of surrender to process, which although culminating in ecstatic consummation, ends in the "ashes cold" left behind by the lovers in The Eve of Saint Agnes who have fled "ages long ago" (xlii).

A careful reading of Keats' letters reveals that in the fall and winter of 1818-1819, the period when he was working on Hyperion, his personal confrontation with "the giant agony of the world" was preparing him for the important spiritual breakthrough that occurred just after he abandoned the poem and before he took up the second version. Until the writing of Endymion he clung to the "sky-engendered" half of his identity, trying to will the universe to a pattern of his own making, and refusing to admit the possibility of evil and suffering. In the "Epistle to Reynolds," however, he confessed to a new awareness of an "eternal fierce destruction" (97) which he tried to will out of his mind with the cry "Away, ye horrid mood!/Moods of one's mind! You know I hate them well" (105-106). A year later, after experiencing bereavement, personal and professional frustration, ill health, and separation from loved ones, he was ready to accept the shadow side of both his own nature and the nature of life. In a letter to his brother George in March, 1819, in which he meditates on the baser side of human nature, he comes to the implied conclusion, with a mature resignation, that for all his noble and lofty ideals man is as close in nature to the hawk as to the nightingale.<sup>10</sup>

The letter represents an important psychological turning-point for Keats,





marked by a seizure of inexplicable and uncontrollable laughter (celebrated in the sonnet, "Why Did I Laugh Tonight") and followed by a great relaxation of mind and body, a new self-containment in which neither pleasure nor pain can touch him and in which poetry, ambition and love appear to him with the detachment of the "figures on a Greek vase."<sup>11</sup> He has now recognized "the purposiveness of the hawk," that is, the selfish, self-assertive instinct which pervades the natural world, as the obverse side of the ideal of "disinterestedness," the capacity for "heroism" which he calls "the pearl in the rubbish" and of which Christ and Socrates are the great historical examples. Indeed, the "splendour" of Christ, which shines through the "pious frauds of Religion" may not, he implies, be incompatible with his own "instinctive course" nor with "the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness" which "the greater part of Men" share with the hawk.<sup>12</sup>

This letter may be regarded as the discursive prose account, on the conscious level, of the psycho-evolutionary event celebrated in the first Hyperion fragment, the fall of an old order to prepare the way for the new:

There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown  
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir  
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be  
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
Of the sky-children. (I, 127-133).

Saturn's prophecy is Keats' metaphor for the transition occurring in his own psyche, a transition to the stage of individuation that the depth-psychologists call confrontation with the "Self" as a complexio oppositorum and that in psycho-evolutionary terms is defined as the birth



of polarity. Typologically, the beginning of consciousness, symbolized in the myths of creation, is synonymous both with the birth of polarity and with the "fall."<sup>13</sup> Hence, psychologically the emergence of a new level of consciousness is marked by a heightened awareness of opposites accompanied by an increased sense of alienation from the cosmic unity from which one's own identity has emerged. To express this phenomenon, Keats, like other mythopoeic writers (I think especially of Melville), revived the myth of Coelus and Terra, the twins born from the original cosmic egg, whose "earth-born/And sky-engendered" children, the Titans, fall away from their divine origins and become impotent. The stage of development in the individual psyche which is characterized by the conscious assimilation of polarity is symbolized in Keats' myth by the state of the fallen Titans as it is described by Thea in her first speech to Saturn:

For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;  
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 Has from the sceptre pass'd; and all the air  
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,  
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;  
 And the sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 O aching time! O moments big as years!  
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
 And press it so upon our weary griefs  
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe. (I, 55-67).

The theme of alienation is still more directly expressed in Saturn's reply to Thea:

I am gone  
 Away from my own bosom: I have left  
 My strong identity, my real self,  
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit  
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!  
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round





Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;  
 Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;  
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.--  
 Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile . . . (I, 112-124).

In the council of the fallen Titans which follows, the limits of Saturn's understanding, betrayed in his impotent bafflement at the Titans' fall and his stubborn refusal to accept it (II, 129-166), represent the limits of the old and now obsolete stage of consciousness out of which Keats himself is emerging. To find the resources necessary to advance to a new stage he must avail himself of the wisdom, or Gnosis, lying at the deepest and most ancient level of the psyche, the wisdom of Oceanus. Oceanus is an appropriate symbol here, not only because the ocean has come to be recognized as a symbol of the unconscious, but also because as the oldest of the Titans the figure personifies the primordial level of the unconscious, the "collective" or "racial" unconscious. Unlike Saturn, whose understanding is bounded by the traditional wisdom "Studied from that old spirit-leaved book" (II, 133), suggesting the values preserved by established civilization, Oceanus, with his deeper, more dynamic wisdom, is able to recognize the fall of the old order as a necessary prerequisite for a new and superior order, to see it as part of the "grand march" of creative "becoming," of the perpetual unfolding of consciousness.

## II

Saturn is one of three hero-figures each of whom may be regarded as a projection of Keats' struggle toward heroic identity. While each of



Saturn, Hyperion and Apollo represents certain aspects of the hero archetype, none of them alone adequately fills the role of the hero-redeemer whose role is to rescue the psyche from the fallen state, Saturn because he represents stasis, or arrested development, Apollo because, unlike Shelley's Prometheus, he remains bound by the conservatism of the values with which he has been traditionally associated, and Hyperion because, like Milton's Satan, his dynamic, liberating value is not recognized and appropriated fully by the consciousness of his creator.

Saturn appears first, as a gray-haired, monolithic, sterile figure resembling a marble statue. In his associations with age, silence, stone, shade, cold and death he has much in common with Blake's Urizen, and, in his sleeping state<sup>14</sup> and as the object of the concern and protectiveness of the eternal feminine, with Blake's Albion. As we have seen, he has fallen from a former state of divinity, has lost his power, and is alienated from himself and tormented by a determination to recover what has been lost.

Hyperion then appears among the fallen Titans, apparently as the hero who is to save them. One of the original twelve Titans engendered by Coelus and Terra, he is a type of the sun-god, sharing much in common with Blake's Los in the imagery associated with him. He blazes (I, 166), flames (I, 214), flares (I, 217), rides on a "planet orb of fire" (I, 269), is "full of wrath" (I, 213), and lives in a "palace bright/Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold" (I, 176-177). Although he alone among the Titans retains "His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty" (I, 165), his halls are haunted by "Spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom" (I, 229), and by "effigies of pain" (I, 228). "The blaze, the splendour and the symmetry I cannot see," he cries, "but darkness, death and darkness" (I, 241-242), and as he succumbs to the terror,





through all his bulk an agony  
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular. (I, 259-261).

The appearance of the serpent portends the possibility of his fall--"am I too to fall?" he cries (I, 234)--because like the coiled serpent beneath Demogorgon's throne, the serpent here embodies, on the one hand, the ever-present threat that the libidinous creative energy will flow back in a regressive direction toward the level of unconscious instinctuality, and, on the other, the potential for the release of energy in creative regeneration. Paradoxically, however, as both myth and depth-psychology show and as I have repeatedly emphasized, regressive return to darkness and chaos is the prerequisite of regeneration. Hence Hyperion, the "Son of Mysteries" (I, 310), the "King of Day" (II, 380), is commanded by his Father, who grieves over the sad ruin of his children, to descend into the realm of the fallen as the bringer of divine aid. Hyperion is both the "son" and the "sun" who must be sacrificed to the darkness in order to bring light into the cosmos. Accepting his mission, Hyperion, at the end of Book II, "plunges all noiseless into the deep night" (I, 357).

Having exhausted Hyperion's heroic possibilities, the poet takes up Apollo as his "golden theme" (II, 28). Keats had intended Apollo to be the hero who would represent his ideal synthesis of vision (a "far-seeing" god) and will (he would "shape his actions like one"); but, in fact, Apollo is even less heroic than his predecessor, for his sensitivity to suffering, his penetrating vision enabling him to see "beyond the bourn," is accompanied by a certain passive helplessness, a corrosion of the will, which makes him feel "cursed and thwarted" (III, 92). He proclaims that "Knowledge enormous" makes him a god (III, 113), but he is not fit to be a god, or even a hero, because he lacks the power that





should accompany knowledge. He can only wander "Full ankle-deep in the lilies of the vale" (III, 34) in search of a "covert" or "cave" (III, 39) in which to escape from the haunting effect of "the murmurous noise of waves" (III, 40), helplessly weeping: "He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears/Went trickling down the golden bow he held" (III, 43-44). Impotent himself he asks:

Where is power?  
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
Makes this alarum in the elements,  
While I here idle listen on the shores  
In fearless yet in aching ignorance? (III, 103-107).<sup>15</sup>

The "aching ignorance" and the lines which follow suggest that his "knowledge" is limited to what he has learned second hand from civilization's record of its past, that he lacks "experience" of what he "knows":

Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,  
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
Creations and destroyings, all at once  
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain  
And deify me . . . (III, 114-119).

Such knowledge does not deify. That is why the poet had to abandon his hero precisely at this point and take up the theme again when he himself was ready for a new transformation. It is significant in this respect that Apollo makes his appearance in "morning twilight" (III, 33) rather than in the blaze of noon, and that he has just left his "mother fair/ And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower" (III, 31-32): he is an adolescent god, a god in posse, who must be forged in the fire of ordeal before he is ready for apotheosis; or, in terms of Keatsian metaphysics, he is an "intelligence" who must yet pass through the "vale of Soul-making" before he is ready to assume the divinity to which he was born.



## III

The "soul-making" traumas that Keats experienced between the composition of the two Hyperion fragments resulted in a conscious and deliberate use, in The Fall of Hyperion, of the act of creating poetry as a vehicle in the quest for identity. The opening passage reveals a conscious concern, a concern that was already inherent in "Sleep and Poetry" but on a less conscious level, with the relationship between the passive and universal experience of dreaming and the act of telling the dream, an act that is dependent on the will of the individual. At the same time the passage embodies a deliberate challenge to the reader, a challenge that the poet is meeting in the very act of writing the poem, to discover the extent to which the "fanatic" who dreams and the "poet" who tells his dreams may be identified with Keats himself, and hence the extent to which he may be accurately termed a poet.

Harold Bloom suggests that The Fall of Hyperion is very near to being the archetypal Romantic poem because it is a poem of self-recognition, of the relationship of the poet to his own vision.<sup>16</sup> Certainly the greater subjectivity of the second version of the myth is obvious, for the poet now abandons the dramatic objectivity of the epic form which he used in Hyperion and reverts to the mediaeval dream vision in which he can take part in his own persona, in an attempt to discover, once and for all, his responsibility as a poet. The second version has "an intimacy and a human quality quite different from that of the first," observes Katherine Wilson: Keats "felt his emphasis should be on his own new experience rather than on that of an outgrown god."<sup>17</sup>

The most penetrating study of the poem that has been made from





this view is that of Irene Chayes in "Dreamer, Poet, and Poem in The Fall of Hyperion" in which she argues that the subject of the poem is the experience of composing poetry, and that "the poem being composed is identical with the account of its composition."<sup>18</sup> The use of the framework of the mediaeval dream vision, she points out, creates two perspectives, that of the dreamer and that of the conscious teller of the dream. The task of the "Keatsian hero" is to bring the two perspectives into conjunction, that is, to bring the archetypal world of monolithic permanence into conjunction with the experiential world of process, to bring art into the service of life. His performance of the task requires an act of the will. Vision, which is a passive experience, becomes poetry only when it is acted upon, when it is given objective form as "melodious utterance" (I, 6). Since to enact this principle as "experience" is the raison d'être of the poem, and since experience is an infinitely open-ended process, the poem does not need a conclusion to fulfil its soul-making function.<sup>19</sup>

Chayes' interpretation, however, does not fully account for the dominant role of Moneta in the poem, nor for the tenacity of the Hyperion figure. The second fragment can be regarded as a continuation of the first with a more conscious identification on the part of the poet between his own psychodynamics and his mythic figures. He knows now that Saturn, personifying the spell-bound world of dream, Hyperion, creative energy, and Moneta, the collective gnosis of the race (as the "Shade of Memory" she is a new version of the "awful Goddess," Mnemosyne of the earlier poem) are inhabitants of his own psyche. The subject of the poem is the confrontation between these elements in himself as he struggles toward a synthesis.



On the first level of the vision the poet finds himself alone at the scene of a pastoral feast which has already taken place. Succumbing to an "appetite/More yearning than on earth I ever felt" (I, 38-39), he partakes of the "remnants" that have been left behind by the departed guests. A mythopoeic reading of this passage suggests that the poet is participating in a sacrament of communion<sup>20</sup> with those who have visited the place and partaken of the same food before him, that is, other poets. As a direct result of this communion he is immersed in a realm that has the same characteristics as that of the fallen Saturn of the earlier version. Indeed, he himself as "dreamer" is a personification of the principle represented by Saturn in the earlier poem, for the "domineering potion" (I, 54) that he drinks numbs him, making him part of the realm of the static and the sterile. He compares his state to that of "a Silenus on an antique vase" (I, 55), and he stands upon the marble floor of "an eternal domed monument" (I, 71), surrounded by the petrified relics of an ancient religion (I, 72-80). Then, raising his eyes and looking westward, he sees "An image, huge of feature as a cloud,/At level of whose feet an altar slept" (I, 87-88). Typologically the altar is related to "the theme of the sacrificial hero: the handsome young man who places himself on an altar,"<sup>21</sup> and signifies the sacrificial death of the ego with its over-reaching idealism. As Joseph Henderson explains in "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," the mystery of the proffered human sacrifice is expressed "precisely because it is a mystery . . . in a ritual act that, in its symbolism, carries us a long way back into man's history."<sup>22</sup> The altar in The Fall of Hyperion, suggests Katherine Wilson, is "the place where the ego is sacrificed to the Self."<sup>23</sup> Moneta, "the muse of the Self," demands the sacrifice of the ego in order to save





the Self from death: "If you canst not ascend/These steps, die on that marble where thou art" (I, 108-109). To escape this death the hero must, by an act of the will, embrace another. To escape death-in-life he must confront life-in-death:

One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd  
The lowest stair; and, as it touch'd, life seem'd  
To pour in at the toes. (I, 132-134).

Although an attempt to explain the Moneta figure in metaphysical terms can only reduce its meaning, one can say with some accuracy that she personifies everything in the psyche that threatens the ego and the achievements to which it aspires. The greatest threat to Keats' self-confidence was, as we have seen, the literary legacy of the past of which he aspired to be worthy in his identity as poet. It is fitting, therefore, that the traditional Muse should appear to him as a figure of terror, demanding almost more of him than he is able to perform. The figure has, in fact, been interpreted as "the accumulated achievement of the past,"<sup>24</sup> and as "the collective memory of tradition."<sup>25</sup> Although these interpretations are valid as far as they go, they, nevertheless, fall short of fully explaining the figure, for Moneta also has the characteristics of the Jungian anima, in both its negative and positive aspects, as well as those of the "shadow." True to the nature of these autonomous powers in the unconscious, she must undermine the faith of the ego in its own value:

What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,  
To the great world. Thou art a dreaming thing  
A fever of thyself--think of the earth;  
What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee?  
What haven? every creature hath its home;  
Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,  
Whether his labours be sublime or low--  
The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct:





Only the dreamer venoms all his days,  
 Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve. (I, 167-176).

She continues her ruthless attack on the ego by destroying her victim's confidence that he is a poet. Drawing a clear distinction between poet and dreamer she relegates the narrator to the "dreamer tribe" who poisons the world rather than heals it (I, 198-202). Characteristically, the unconscious is attacking the conscious where it is most vulnerable, in Keats' case his faith in himself as an inheritor of the tradition of the imitatio Apollinis,<sup>26</sup> the tradition in which the poet is "a sage;/ A humanist, physician to all men" (I, 189-190). Hence the poet's reaction to the attack is the agonized cry, "Apollo! faded! O far-flown Apollo!" (I, 204).<sup>27</sup> Apollo is the dying god within him who must die to be reborn as the new (and, paradoxically, older) god, Hyperion.

Having risen to Moneta's challenge by mounting the steps to the altar, the dreamer has proven himself worthy to gaze on her face:

I had a terror of her robes,  
 And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow  
 Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,  
 That made my heart too small to hold its blood.  
 This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand  
 Parted the veils. (I, 251-256).<sup>28</sup>

When the poet then dares, emboldened by the "benignant light" of her eyes (I, 265) to inquire "what things the hollow brain/Behind enwombed" (I, 276-277), she reveals the world of archetypal forms, symbolized here, as in the earlier version, by the still and sterile realm of the fallen Saturn, where Saturn, Thea and Moneta form a trinity of "three fixed shapes" (I, 391). These are what Shelley calls the "unchangeable forms of human nature,"<sup>29</sup> which remain unredeemed from decay or, like the figures here, buried in oblivion,



Deep in the shady sadness of a vale  
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
 Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star. (I, 294-296),

unless they are rescued and imbued with life by the creative energy of the poet. Language is the breath of life that he breathes into the marble statues, into the "sculpture builded up upon the grave/Of their own power" (I, 383-384). Through the medium of Moneta the unconscious is warning the conscious that the archetypes "waste in pain/And darkness for no hope" (I, 462-463) unless the dreamer is transformed into the "teller" who "humanizes" the archetypes, "Making comparisons of earthly things" (II, 2-3).

The transforming symbol is the figure of Hyperion who bursts upon the scene in all his unquenchable fiery glory:

His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
 That scared away the meek ethereal hours,  
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared . . .  
 (II, 58-61).

The poem breaks off at this point because the poet senses, that is, he experiences a "Sensation," that his conscious intentions are being undermined by the power which Hyperion represents. Like Paradise Lost the poem exemplifies the tendency of the unconscious to subvert the conscious intentions and values of the artist, for Hyperion, who was intended to fall, in fact begins to take over the poem. While Milton's ego-consciousness, because it was supported by a strong religious and moral ethos, held its own against the libidinous energy personified by Satan, that of Keats, without this support, is on the verge of succumbing to "Hyperion's party." As to whether the other part of Blake's judgment of Milton--"without knowing it"--applies to Keats we can only speculate,





but the fact that he abandons the poem just as Hyperion enters it, combined with what we have learned about his obsession with the problem of the poet's identity, suggests that, unlike Milton, he did recognize the positive nature of the forces emerging from his unconscious, that at the end of the second Hyperion fragment he had found and appropriated the object of his quest.



## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

I have tried to establish in the foregoing pages evidence of a correspondence between, on the one hand, the universal monomyth of the hero, whose birth, career and death comprise a symbolic representation of the growth of consciousness in both the individual and the race, and on the other, the patterns of symbolism to be found in those poems of the Romantic period concerned with heroic figures. In short, my aim has been to observe in the poetry the occurrence of "mythic motifs." I have maintained, further, that an identity exists between the hero of a poem and the poet himself, not in any naive "biographical" sense, but in that in his struggle toward identity the poet objectifies, or "projects," at each stage of his development the imaginative embodiment, or personification, of the fulfilment toward which he strives.

The poet is himself a hero because through the medium of language he can profoundly affect the society of which he is a part. He holds before us for our contemplation an ideal of moral excellence which he intuits to be potentially realizable in the individual and, by extension, in the race. This ideal is not his personal life as it is lived in the empirical world, for the poet is mortal and fallible like other men, but in his transpersonal life as it is lived in the world of the spirit, the life he makes manifest in the language of myth.

The central motif of the hero myth is the hero's relationship with "the dragon" and "the treasure," which translated into the terms of depth-psychology become the "First Parents." Transformations in his



identity correspond to transformations in the relationships within the "family romance." The pattern of these relationships is, in brief, that the hero leaves the protected paradise of the womb, the world of the "Great Mother," encounters the restrictive "authority" of his rival, the "Terrible Father," overcomes him by usurping his role or identifying with him, and hence is able to re-possess the Mother and establish a new kingdom.

My frame of reference has been the theories of myth interpretation advanced by depth-psychology, particularly the work of Erich Neumann and Joseph Campbell, both of whom see the creative individual, the artist, as the most advanced transformation of the hero-type. The archetypal hero-deed has always been to kill the dragon who guards the lost treasure and restore the treasure to the world. The poet performs the hero-deed in resurrecting and reviving a long neglected part of the psyche. As the inspired individual, the seer, the "prophet," he represents the compensatory principle in the psycho-evolutionary process. He revives or re-activates whichever polarity in the psychic dialectic is in danger of being crushed by its opposite. The role of the Romantic poet-hero was to revive the feminine polarity--insight, intuition, emotion, instinct, "sensation," inspiration--all the dynamics which have their source in the unconscious, as opposed to the analytical reason or "understanding," which is associated with the conscious mind and had gained dominance in the Age of Reason. He had to restore to her throne the feminine Muse, not as a classical ornament grafted by the "wilful fancy" upon "feelings of the imagination" (The Prelude, VIII, 584-585), but as a living symbol of those feelings, as the mythic personification of an internal dynamic of the poet's own psyche, that mysterious autonomous





power at work in the creative process to which Jung gives the term "anima." In reviving her, the Romantic poets were at the same time reclaiming a long and venerable tradition of which they regarded themselves the heirs, and to which they felt a sacred responsibility, the visionary tradition inherent in the Judaic-Christian culture and embodied both in the Scriptures and in the works of visionary writers such as Dante, Spenser, Bunyan and Milton. To fulfil this responsibility they had to raise from the unconscious realm of the psyche their own versions of Beatrice and Urania. For Wordsworth it was Nature, the kind benefactress who "never did betray/The heart that loved her"; for Shelley it was the epipsyche manifest in manifold forms throughout the poetry and culminating in Asia. For Keats it was the priestess, Mnemosyne-Moneta, who demanded no less than total surrender of the ego. She comes closest of the three to personifying the Jungian collective unconscious at whose inmost centre is to be found the "Self," the goal of self-fulfilment.

The Romantic period represents an important transition in the evolution of the hero-archetype and hence of the racial consciousness which it symbolizes. Just as the poet passes through a series of transformations in his quest for fulfilment or "identity," transformations which are represented in his personal myth either by episodes in the career of a single hero, as in The Prelude, or by a series of heroes, as in the poetry of Shelley and Keats, so his ideal of heroism undergoes transformations which mark advances in the evolution of racial consciousness, for "the hero is the archetypal forerunner of mankind in general."<sup>1</sup> The hero myth has its origins in the first dawn of ego-consciousness, in the individual's earliest awareness of the power he wields over his environment, a power personified in the type of hero that



Neumann calls the "extraverted type."<sup>2</sup> In the primitive world where man's preoccupation is physical survival, the hero is a man of action. He is the "founder, leader, and liberator whose deeds change the face of the world." He represents the first of the three dimensions in which the development of the psyche proceeds, that of outward adaptation to the physical world. More advanced civilizations need moral leadership in their heroes. They need the "introverted" hero, the culture-bringer, the sage, the teacher, who exalts and disseminates the values of knowledge and wisdom.

The Romantic poet both represents this phase and heralds a still more radical transformation of the hero-type. Although the self-consciousness of the Romantic poet, his preoccupation with his subjective reactions to experience, including the experience of writing poetry itself, has become a critical truism, the evolutionary significance of this self-consciousness has been ignored. His pre-occupation with hero-types springs from his introversion, from his increased sense of his individuality, and his awareness at the same time that his own internal processes constitute the type of similar processes in each individual and in the development of mankind as a whole. In using poetry as a vehicle for self-understanding and self-transformation he performs "the modern hero-deed," that of "questing to bring to light again the lost Atlantis of the co-ordinated soul."<sup>3</sup>

To speak of "the Romantic poet" is not to ignore the differences between the writers with whose poetry I have dealt, for to do so would be to deny the very individuality for which the hero as a symbol stands. The terms of my thesis, however, require a greater emphasis on the common ground the poets of the Romantic period share as champions of a spiritual





or "psychological" value that is still in grave danger of being lost to humanity. Each poet was aware of the crisis and each confronted it in his own way.

Byron is the least amenable of all to inclusion in a common pattern. While his "hero" represents the ultimate in autonomous individuality, he fails to live out the complete hero cycle which culminates in the hieros gamos, the "great consummation," as Wordsworth calls it. He can never re-unite with the Mother because his impotent rage against the father deprives him of the power he needs to usurp the father's place. He is caught between the "First Parents," equally incapable of letting go his first hold on the mother and of overcoming his rival, the father.

Shelley, for all his complexity as both man and artist, is the poet in whose development the monomythic pattern is most easily traced. From the beginning of his development he was engaged in a fight with the dragon, whom he had to find a way of overcoming in order to rediscover and re-possess his lost Asia. The curse that has to be recalled in Prometheus Unbound is the curse that Shelley hurled against "authority" throughout his early career, including the authority of that power which elected him as its emissary. Alastor represents the state at which the poet has become conscious of his visionary power and experiences a dangerous ambivalence toward it. Because of the tendency of vision to draw the libido inward, a tension is set up between the visionary, or introverted, direction of the poet's creative energy and its social or extraverted direction, a tension which amounts almost to a crucifixion inflicted by a tyrant deity. In The Revolt of Islam Shelley accepts the social usefulness of vision in the process of historical evolution which,



he believed, consists in a struggle between tyrant and victim; and in Prometheus Unbound the tyrant-victim relationship is recognized as a delusion in which tyrant and victim conspire and which vanishes as soon as they are identified as psychic phenomena. While, therefore, throughout most of his career Shelley was preoccupied with his role as a social reformer, as an "unacknowledged legislator of the world," the theme of Prometheus Unbound is internal transformation in the consciousness of the individual, which by extension, however, can bring a transformation in the consciousness of a whole society.

Wordsworth and Keats seem to me more "modern," in the sense in which Jung and Campbell use the term, because they were less concerned than Shelley with legislating the world. The self-preoccupation, the "egotistical sublime" in Wordsworth, which Keats first condemned and ultimately emulated, exemplifies the "constant increase in centroverson"<sup>4</sup> which, according to Neumann, characterizes the evolution of consciousness and which tends toward its "consolidation" and "stabilization." This strengthening of the personality is mankind's defense against the threat of its dissolution in death.

Wordsworth wrote The Prelude avowedly to prepare himself for a greater achievement by fixing "the wavering balance of his mind" (I, 650), and in order, he tells Coleridge, that "I be taught/To understand myself" (654-655), but this self-preparation turned out to be itself the achievement. The poem merely served the end of self-creation. Similarly for Keats, as I have tried to show, the act of writing poetry was an act of self-creation and each major poem represented a crisis or transformation in the poet's development. I suggested in my discussion of Keats that he represents the hero-archetype in its most advanced form. The motifs of



fallen gods, and of sacrifice culminating in the confrontation with the priestess who awaits him beside a sacrificial altar reveal that at the age of twenty-four and only eighteen months before his death Keats arrived at a stage in his psychological development which heralded a transformation which has yet to be realized in the race, the shifting of "the center of gravity"<sup>5</sup> from ego-consciousness to the Self. However, the modern individual cannot afford, as Campbell warns, to wait for his society "to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding."<sup>6</sup> He must live in Asia's conviction that "This is the season, this the day, the hour . . . ."





1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) and (2) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

2. In the second part we consider the case of the existence of solutions for the system of equations (1) and (2) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

3. In the third part we consider the case of the existence of solutions for the system of equations (1) and (2) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

4. In the fourth part we consider the case of the existence of solutions for the system of equations (1) and (2) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

5. In the fifth part we consider the case of the existence of solutions for the system of equations (1) and (2) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

## FOOTNOTES

### Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 68.

<sup>2</sup>Frankl, xi.

<sup>3</sup>Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry," Works, VII, 137.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>7</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 1-20.

<sup>8</sup>Jung, The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature, 73.

<sup>9</sup>Shelley, Works, VII, 136.

<sup>10</sup>De Quincey, Writings, XI, 294.

<sup>11</sup>Coleridge, Table Talk, 136.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 291.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>14</sup>Coleridge, Anima Poetae, 25.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>16</sup>Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ch. IX, passim.

<sup>17</sup>See Karl Jaspers, Kant, 33-64 passim. See also Abrams' reference to Jung as "an inheritor of the depth-psychology of German romanticism", p. 211.

<sup>18</sup>Read, True Voice of Feeling, 167. See also Schelling's Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature (1807) in the Appendix, in which he says: "It has long been perceived that not



everything in art is the outcome of consciousness, that an unconscious force must be linked with conscious activity and that it is the perfect unanimity and mutual interpenetration of the two which produces the highest art." (See Read p. 331.)

<sup>19</sup> Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, chs. V, VI, and VII, passim.

<sup>20</sup> Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, 383.

<sup>21</sup> Shelley, Works, VII, 109.

<sup>22</sup> Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, I, 167.

<sup>23</sup> Shelley, Works, VII, 135.

<sup>24</sup> Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, I, 186.

<sup>25</sup> Bush, Introduction, passim.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>27</sup> Baynes, 244.

<sup>28</sup> Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, 156.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 67-91, passim.

<sup>31</sup> Coleridge, Anima Poetae, 74.

<sup>32</sup> Coleridge, Statesman's Manual, 437.

<sup>33</sup> Jung, Spirit in Man, 70.

<sup>34</sup> Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 213.

<sup>35</sup> Jung, Man and His Symbols, 57.

<sup>36</sup> Jung, Spirit in Man, 89-90.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>38</sup> Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 147.





<sup>39</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, xvi.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>42</sup>Baynes, 113.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 246.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 198.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell, 4.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>48</sup>Shelley, Works, VII, 124-125.

<sup>49</sup>Raglan, 223.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 190.

<sup>51</sup>Van Gennep, vii.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 191.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 194.

<sup>54</sup>Aldrich, vii.

<sup>55</sup>Frankfort, 7.

<sup>56</sup>Langer, 175.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 200.



- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., xiv.
- <sup>62</sup>Thorburn, 3.
- <sup>63</sup>Ibid., 71-72.
- <sup>64</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 11.
- <sup>65</sup>Thorburn, 5.
- <sup>66</sup>Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 210.
- <sup>67</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 34-35.
- <sup>68</sup>Shelley, Works, VII, 140.
- <sup>69</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 325.
- <sup>70</sup>Bodkin, Type Images, Preface.
- <sup>71</sup>Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, 125.
- <sup>72</sup>Ibid., 112.
- <sup>73</sup>Ibid., 99.
- <sup>74</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 1.
- <sup>75</sup>Ibid., 85.
- <sup>76</sup>Ibid., 85.
- <sup>77</sup>Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, 33-34.
- <sup>78</sup>Ibid., 139-140.
- <sup>79</sup>Ibid., 71-128.
- <sup>80</sup>Wellek & Warren, 8.
- <sup>81</sup>Frye, Romanticism Reconsidered, 14.
- <sup>82</sup>Ibid., 5.



- <sup>83</sup>Frye, A Study of English Romanticism, 33.
- <sup>84</sup>Ibid., 65.
- <sup>85</sup>Frye, (ed.), Romanticism Reconsidered, 131-132.
- <sup>86</sup>Wellek & Warren, 82.
- <sup>87</sup>Ibid., 121.
- <sup>88</sup>Ibid., 121.
- <sup>89</sup>Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 90.
- <sup>90</sup>Jung, Spirit in Man, 101.
- <sup>91</sup>Ibid., 82.
- <sup>92</sup>Read, "Myth, Dream, and Poem," 178-179.
- <sup>93</sup>Jung, Spirit in Man, 89-90.
- <sup>94</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 21-24.
- <sup>95</sup>Read, "Myth, Dream and Poem," 177-178.
- <sup>96</sup>Coleridge, Statesman's Manual, 432.
- <sup>97</sup>Ibid., 436.

## Chapter II

- <sup>1</sup>Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 293.
- <sup>2</sup>Jung, Man and His Symbols, 68.
- <sup>3</sup>Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, 124.
- <sup>4</sup>Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, 154-155.
- <sup>5</sup>Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, 128.





<sup>6</sup>Jung, Man and His Symbols, 68.

<sup>7</sup>Baynes, 197 and 402.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 422-423.

<sup>9</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 109. William Collins' "rich-hair'd Youth of Morn" ("Ode on the Poetical Character," I, 39), and Keats' "blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire" (Hyperion, I, 166) can be considered versions of this archetype, as a later chapter will show.

<sup>10</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 131.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>12</sup>Carlyle, Heroes, 105.

<sup>13</sup>Sewell, 126.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>17</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 390.

<sup>18</sup>Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, 155.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>20</sup>Symbols of Transformation, 333.

<sup>21</sup>Jung, Man and His Symbols, 101.

<sup>22</sup>Jung, Structure and Dynamics, 292.

<sup>23</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 244.

<sup>24</sup>Rank, 69-71.

<sup>25</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 148.



<sup>26</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 266.

<sup>27</sup>Carlyle, Heroes, 8.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>30</sup>Baynes, 254.

<sup>31</sup>Aldrich, 235-236.

<sup>32</sup>Frye, A Study of English Romanticism, 26.

<sup>33</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 5.

<sup>34</sup>Campbell calls psychoanalysis "the modern tool" for interpreting the symbolism of myth, p. vii.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>36</sup>Rank, 9.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted by Ernest Jones, Hamlet and Oedipus, 66.

<sup>39</sup>Jones, Hamlet and Oedipus, 87.

<sup>40</sup>Rank, 13.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>46</sup>Jung, The Development of Personality, 45.





<sup>47</sup>Thorburn, 67.

<sup>48</sup>Baynes, 728.

<sup>49</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 47.

<sup>50</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 283n.

<sup>51</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 167.

<sup>52</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 235n.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 419.

<sup>54</sup>Jung, Development of Personality, 75 (*italics mine*).

<sup>55</sup>Baynes, 264.

<sup>56</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 418.

<sup>57</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 182.

<sup>58</sup>Neumann bases his conclusions on the findings of Bronislaw Malinowski: Mutterrechteiche Familie und Ödipus-Komplex, 1924.

<sup>59</sup>Aldrich, 6-7.

<sup>60</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, xlii.

<sup>61</sup>Aldrich, 160.

<sup>62</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 152-154.

<sup>63</sup>Baynes, 386.

<sup>64</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 223-224 (*italics mine*).

<sup>65</sup>See bibliography.

<sup>66</sup>Frankfort, 371.

<sup>67</sup>Baynes, 248.



<sup>68</sup>Campbell, 109.

### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>Raine, Traditional Wisdom, 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>3</sup>Coleridge, Statesman's Manual, 423.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 436.

<sup>5</sup>Carlyle, Heroes, 9.

<sup>6</sup>Jung, Man and His Symbols, 61 (*italics mine*).

<sup>7</sup>Jung, Aion, 68-69.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 36-40.

<sup>9</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 368.

<sup>10</sup>Jung, Aion, 42.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 68-70.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 62, n75.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>16</sup>Lynch, 191.

<sup>17</sup>Shelley, "An Essay on Christianity," Works, VI, 232-236.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>19</sup>Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, April 21, 1819, Letters, II, 103.



<sup>20</sup>Rank, 72.

<sup>21</sup>See Chesterton, Santayana, and V. White, passim.

<sup>22</sup>Campbell, 39-41. (See also 319, where he says: "The divine being is a revelation of the omnipotent Self, which dwells within us all. The contemplation of the life [Christ's] thus should be undertaken as a meditation of one's own immanent divinity, not as a prelude to precise imitation, the lesson being, not 'Do thus and be good,' but 'Know this and be God.'")

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 249.

<sup>24</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 271.

<sup>25</sup>Bodkin, Type Images, 108.

<sup>26</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 170.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 171-172. (Eliade's approach, as Part Two of the thesis will reveal, has special significance for Wordsworth.)

<sup>28</sup>White, 228.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 244-245.

<sup>30</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 271-280.

<sup>31</sup>Bodkin, Type Images, 13.

<sup>32</sup>Santayana, Idea of Christ, 134.

<sup>33</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 165.

<sup>34</sup>Jung, Spirit in Man, 98.

<sup>35</sup>Frye, A Study of English Romanticism, 35-36.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>37</sup>In his concept of the poet as hero Carlyle, like his Romantic predecessors in England, is indebted to the German transcendental tradition in which is implicit the view that the poet is an unacknowledged hierophant. See especially his essays on Schiller, on Goethe and his





review of a contemporary English work on German poetry in which he insists: "The true Poet . . . is still an Orpheus whose Lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities." (Miscellaneous Essays II, p. 189).

<sup>38</sup>Carlyle, 95.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>43</sup>Campbell, 17.

<sup>44</sup>Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, 185.

<sup>45</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 345.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>47</sup>Rollo May points out that Sophocles' Oedipus wins from his suffering the power to "impart grace," to atone for the guilt of others, and goes on, ". . . there is also a clear symbolic element to make the point of his grace unmistakable. The oracle has revealed that his body after death will insure victory to the land and the ruler which possess him. The mere 'presence' of his body has this power." (See "Oedipus and Self-Knowledge" in Existential Psychotherapy, p. 17-18). It is also to be noted that the Messenger's description of Oedipus' mysterious and miraculous death in Oedipus at Colonus has a tone much like that of the gospel descriptions of Christ's death and resurrection. It was "above mortal's, wonderful" (Complete Greek Drama, I, 665). It seems clear to me that Greek tragedy had the same psychological or "religious" function as the Christian mass: atonement for guilt by proxy. Such a view is consistent, furthermore, with the widely accepted theory that classical Greek drama originated in Dionysian ritual.

<sup>48</sup>Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, 169.

<sup>49</sup>See Rollo May's essay "Oedipus and Self-Knowledge," where he says: ". . . the myths are the battles of the gods, now no longer fought far away on Mount Olympus, but the gods in each man's own unconsciousness: the battles of the gods in the structure of each man's deepest experience. . . . The myth helps us to reconcile opposing feelings. The function of these [Greek] dramatic myths is to bring the audience to a new level of



consciousness which embraces both Apollo and the Furies, both freedom and responsibility, both love and hate, both daemonic primitive drives and sophisticated rationality. The myth, by drawing out the various levels of unconscious experience, lifts the person out of his simple oppositions and makes of the hopeless antinomy a creative dialectic. This is the central aspect of the normal therapy of the myth, the healing function of the myth, that was given to the Athenians and the Greek citizens by the presentation of this myth in which the Athenian people as a whole could participate, and twenty-four centuries later these myths still have the same healing power to speak to us." (Existential Psychotherapy, pp. 23-28).

#### Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>Coleridge, Statesman's Manual, Appendix B, 458.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 46 above.

<sup>3</sup>Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, 196-198.

<sup>4</sup>Milbanke, Ralph, Earl of Lovelace, Astarte, ed. Countess of Lovelace (London, Christophers, 1921), cited by Praz, 61-62.

<sup>5</sup>Praz, 70.

<sup>6</sup>Praz, 70.

<sup>7</sup>Knight, "The Two Eternities," in Byron, ed. West, 16.

<sup>8</sup>Chew, 59.

<sup>9</sup>Praz, vii.

<sup>10</sup>Jung implies throughout his discussions of the "anima" that the figures of wife, mother, and sister in imaginative phenomena are versions of a single archetype. See for example, Symbols of Transformation, p. 300.

<sup>11</sup>Raine, Traditional Wisdom, 19.

<sup>12</sup>Barnard, 15.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 15.





<sup>14</sup>Praz, 57.

<sup>15</sup>Thorslev, 197.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Ch. VII, passim.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 108-112, passim.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>21</sup>May, Love and Will, 139.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 140.

<sup>23</sup>Byron to John Murray, October 12, 1817, Letters and Journals, 174-175.

<sup>24</sup>Chew, 37.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>26</sup>Byron is quoted as saying: "You will believe me, what I sometimes believe myself, mad, when I tell you that I seem to have two states of existence, one purely contemplative, during which the crimes, faults, and follies of mankind are laid open to my view (my own forming a prominent object in the picture), and the other active, when I play my part in the drama of life, as if impelled by some power over which I have no control, though the consciousness of doing wrong remains. It is as though I had the faculty of discovering error without the power of avoiding it." See Milbanke, Astarte, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup>Byron to Miss Milbanke, September 16, [1814?], Letters and Journals, III, 137.

<sup>28</sup>Byron, "Detached Thoughts," Letters and Journals, V, 457.

<sup>29</sup>Byron to Francis Hodgson, May 12, 1821, Letters and Journals, V, 284.

<sup>30</sup>Byron to John Murray, June 7, 1820, Letters and Journals, V, 36.



<sup>31</sup>May, Love and Will, 166-167.

<sup>32</sup>Since Byron had a passing acquaintance with Zoroastrianism, he probably had in mind Ahriman, the Zoroastrian principle of evil and darkness.

<sup>33</sup>According to Chew, "This rejection of the pact with the spirits of evil is Byron's great alteration of the Faust-idea." See p. 80.

<sup>34</sup>Byron, Works, V, 208-210.

<sup>35</sup>Byron to John Murray, November 3, 1821, Letters and Journals, V, 470.

<sup>36</sup>Byron, Works, V, 210.

<sup>37</sup>Chew, 149.

## Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, II, 101.

<sup>2</sup>See Bloom, The Visionary Company, pp. 121-159 passim, and Hartman, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>Hartman, 39.

<sup>4</sup>Bloom, Visionary Company, 141. In contrast to the view shared by Bloom and Hartman is that of Havens, who argues (pp. 11-25) that the unique value of Wordsworth's vision is that "for him natural objects were the ladder on which he ascended into the heavens, into the heaven of heavens" (p. 22).

<sup>5</sup>I am referring here to the excerpt from the first book of The Recluse that is included in the Preface (1814) to The Excursion.

<sup>6</sup>All references to The Prelude, except where otherwise indicated, are to the edition of 1805.

<sup>7</sup>In A Defence of Poetry (Works, VII, 109) Shelley speaks of the Imagination as "the principle of synthesis [which] has for its object those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself."



<sup>8</sup>See Peacock, Markham L., The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth, p. 60.

<sup>9</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to Poems (1815), Literary Criticism, 146-149.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>11</sup>Peacock, 61.

<sup>12</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to Poems (1815), Literary Criticism, 149.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>14</sup>Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," in Romanticism Reconsidered, ed. Frye, 69.

<sup>15</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1800), Literary Criticism, 48. (The version of the Preface from which I am quoting, and which is the one most often printed in anthologies and modern editions of the poetry is, although commonly referred to as the "Preface of 1800," actually the revised Preface of 1802.)

<sup>16</sup>Shelley, "Defence of Poetry," Works, VII, 137. Although Shelley proposes the spreading of a curtain as an alternative metaphor to the stripping of "the veil of familiarity," the latter is more characteristic of him. Indeed, the metaphor identifies the principal distinction between the poetics of the two poets. For Shelley poetry is the rending of a veil while for Wordsworth it would seem to be the weaving of one.

<sup>17</sup>Wordsworth, Essay, Supplementary to the Preface to Poems (1815), Literary Criticism, 160.

<sup>18</sup>Peacock, 349.

<sup>19</sup>I explained in Chapter III why I regard the Romantics as the inheritors of the Protestant Christian Humanist tradition represented by Spenser and Milton. Romanticism may be defined as a radical attempt to revitalize this tradition by reclaiming its visionary or prophetic power. See E.J. Rose's essay, "Shelley Reconsidered Plain," Bucknell Review, XIV (May, 1966), p. 46, where he speaks of Shelley as "both a Christian and a Humanist, although he avows neither position."

<sup>20</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 170.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 171-172.





<sup>22</sup>Sewell, 115.

<sup>23</sup>Perkins, 55.

<sup>24</sup>Marsh, "Prefatory Note."

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>26</sup>Eliade, Sacred and Profane, 68-113, passim.

<sup>27</sup>Wordsworth's self-consciousness is undeniable, but it is not "a modern and corrosive self-consciousness," as Hartman calls it (pp. 190-191), and must be distinguished from Byronic self-consciousness which can be called "modern and corrosive."

<sup>28</sup>Keats to J.H. Reynolds, February 3, 1818, Letters, I, 224.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 223.

<sup>30</sup>Keats to Reynolds, May 3, 1818, Letters, I, 281.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 281-282.

<sup>32</sup>Keats to George and Tom Keats, December 27 (?), 1817, Letters, I, 193-194.

<sup>33</sup>Keats to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817, Letters, I, 184.

<sup>34</sup>Keats to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818, Letters, I, 386-387.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 387.

<sup>36</sup>Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, February 19, 1819, Letters, II, 67.

<sup>37</sup>Havens, 286.

<sup>38</sup>Read, Wordsworth, 96.

<sup>39</sup>DeSelincourt, Notes to The Prelude (1805), 273.

<sup>40</sup>Read, Wordsworth, 14.



<sup>41</sup>Read, Wordsworth, 13.

<sup>42</sup>Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, 190.

<sup>43</sup>See also Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, I, p. 57, where he says, "The poetic Psyche, in its process to full development, undergoes as many changes as its Greek namesake, the butterfly."

<sup>44</sup>In naming the "phases" or "transformations" in the career of the Hero I have adapted to my own purposes the terminology of Campbell, Neumann and Eliade.

<sup>45</sup>Potts, 9.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>47</sup>For other references to The Prelude as an epic, see DeSelincourt's Introduction, p. xi. and Havens, p. 271.

<sup>48</sup>Potts, 321.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>52</sup>Harrison, 8.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>55</sup>Wordsworth seems to have been too heretical for even the arch-antinomian Blake, who, according to Henry Crabb Robinson (Diary, II, 9), was offended by the lines in the "Prospectus" to The Excursion in which the poet boasts of passing Jehovah and his angels "unalarmed" (35): "Does Mr. Wordsworth think his mind can surpass Jehovah? I tried to explain this passage in a sense in harmony with Blake's own theories, but failed, and Wordsworth was finally set down as a Pagan; but still with high praise, as the greatest poet of the age" (*italics mine*).

<sup>56</sup>Potts, 6.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.





52. <sup>58</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1800), Literary Criticism,

<sup>59</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to The Excursion (1814), ed. DeSelincourt, 2.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>61</sup>Bateson, 170. (Bateson's censure of the poem, like most adverse criticism of it, excludes "The Ruined Cottage" (1797), which was incorporated into Book I of The Excursion and has had many admirers, including Coleridge. See Bateson, p. 124.)

<sup>62</sup>Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets, 156.

<sup>63</sup>The incident is reported in a letter from Henry Crabb Robinson to Dorothy Wordsworth, February, 1826. See Diary, II, 19.

<sup>64</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to The Excursion (1814), ed. DeSelincourt, 2.

<sup>65</sup>Jung, Aion, 204.

<sup>66</sup>Franz, M.-L. von, "The Process of Individuation," Man and His Symbols, ed. Jung, 207. The leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" would seem to be another version of the archetype. His transcendent, or "mythic," quality is quite explicit:

And the whole body of the Man did seem  
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;  
Or like a man from some far region sent,  
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.  
(109-112).

<sup>67</sup>Wordsworth, Preface to The Excursion (1814), ed. DeSelincourt, 2.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

## Chapter VI

<sup>1</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 131.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.



<sup>3</sup>Campbell, 305.

<sup>4</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 37.

<sup>5</sup>Campbell, 276.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 262.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 281.

<sup>8</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 39-127, passim.

<sup>9</sup>Campbell, 320.

<sup>10</sup>Wordsworth "presumably knew before 1798" (Havens, p. 47) the theories of Burke and his disciples regarding the aesthetic importance of fear as an element of the "sublime," but it is Milton (Paradise Lost, IX, 489-91) to whom he pays direct tribute for the concept of "that beauty, which . . ./Hath terror in it" (XIII, 225-226).

<sup>11</sup>While it is perhaps assuming too much to imply that the bird here is the Freudian taboo object, I suspect that a psychoanalytical investigation of the dynamics behind the appellations in current popular use for "woman," that is "bird" and "chick," would throw some interesting light on this passage.

<sup>12</sup>Geoffrey Durrant finds the same kind of sexual implications in "Nutting" as I do in this and other passages in The Prelude, but insists that there is no need "to invoke Freud and theories of repression and the unconscious; Wordsworth knew well enough what he was about" (p. 118-119). Perhaps so, but in view of what psychoanalysis and depth-psychology have revealed about the creative process, it would seem to me naive to insist that a poet is always, or even most of the time, consciously aware of the full implications of his imagery. Insofar as we can understand anything about the creative process, it now seems clear that it is a dialectic between conscious and unconscious and that the most powerful and evocative imagery springs from a layer of the psyche deeper even than the personal unconscious posited by Freud.

According to Otto Rank in The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, "exposure in the water" in a basket, box or other receptacle is "the symbolic expression of birth" (p. 73). Rank's theory gives support to my interpretation of the passage in question, that is, that the poet re-establishes his bond with the maternal order of being in a symbolic act of regenerative incest in order to be reborn into a new level of awareness that encompasses the invisible and paternal order as well.

<sup>13</sup>Campbell, 297.



<sup>14</sup>This passage (II, 181-237) is an especially interesting example of the unconscious use of archetypal imagery, and embodies a paradox of which I am convinced Wordsworth was unaware. While denying, on the conscious level, the value or even possibility of "parceling out" the psyche, of "splitting" it up according to "geometric rules", the imagery he uses in his rhetorical denial is dividing the psyche into masculine and feminine principles. Indeed, the wand, an obvious phallic symbol, pointing to the river, is masculine ego-consciousness pointing to the unconscious realm of the eternal feminine. According to this interpretation, the image symbolizes the creative process itself.

<sup>15</sup>This set of polarities reminds us that according to Genesis (1:1) the first creative act was a dialectic function between form-giving spirit and formless matter, that is, in Jungian terms, between masculine ego-consciousness and feminine unconscious: "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

<sup>16</sup>See pp. 2-87.

<sup>17</sup>Auden, 6.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 5 and 40-42.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>21</sup>Frankfort, 371.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 372.

<sup>23</sup>In The Demon Lover, A Psychoanalytical Approach to Literature, Arthur Wormhoudt says, "Poetry stems from an oral level of the unconscious . . . , " that is, from repressed memory of the period of development when the poet was at the breast. Mountains in poetry are, therefore, according to Wormhoudt, "breast symbols" (p. 146).

<sup>24</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 218.

<sup>25</sup>Florence Marsh and Kenneth MacLean (see Bibliography).

<sup>26</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 218.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 251.

<sup>28</sup>The uterine symbolism of the grail, and hence of any container





for liquid, has become almost a cliché of psycho-mythological criticism.

<sup>29</sup>On the BBC television series Civilization, Kenneth Clark, for example, said in his discussion of the Romantic period, "Both Byron and Wordsworth fell deeply in love with their sisters. The inevitable prohibition was a disaster for them both." (See p. 280 of Civilization, the book based on the television series).

<sup>30</sup>The fact that poetic inspiration has been, almost without exception in the history of literature, personified as a woman, i.e. the Muse, suggests to me the importance of the feminine element in the creative process. Women, furthermore, seem to play an important part in the lives of most poets, and Wordsworth is no exception.

<sup>31</sup>DeSelincourt's Notes to The Prelude (1805), 273 .

<sup>32</sup>Wormhoudt, 55.

<sup>33</sup>Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, 189.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>35</sup>Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, II, 111-112.

<sup>36</sup>Marsh, 65-66.

<sup>37</sup>Knight, Starlit Dome, 47.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>39</sup>Bodkin, Type Images, 103.

<sup>40</sup>Campbell, 320.

<sup>41</sup>King, 116.

<sup>42</sup>Wormhoudt, 62.



<sup>43</sup>DeSelincourt's Notes to The Prelude (1805), 285.

<sup>44</sup>Wordsworth's description of this oriental garden is strongly reminiscent of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," particularly the reference to the 'Domes of Pleasure' (130-131).

<sup>45</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 233.

<sup>46</sup>Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," Man and His Symbols, (ed. Jung) 69.

<sup>47</sup>See Jung, Symbols of Transformation, pp. 233 ff. and 424 ff.

<sup>48</sup>Campbell's term. See pp. 49-94.

<sup>49</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 327.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 327.

<sup>51</sup>If this suggestion has any validity Wordsworth is here in a long and respectable tradition, dating back to the Song of Solomon, in which erotic love is used as a metaphor for spiritual love. An example which comes immediately to mind is Donne's "Holy Sonnet XIV," in which the poet begs God to "ravish" him in order to make him "chaste."

<sup>52</sup>Auden, 12.

<sup>53</sup>Jacobi, Jolande, "Symbols in an Individual Analysis," Man and His Symbols, ed. C.G. Jung, 331.

<sup>54</sup>Campbell, 51.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 56-57.





<sup>58</sup>It has been suggested to me, and therefore may occur to the reader, that a parallel exists between Wordsworth's meeting with the Old Soldier and Paul's meeting with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 1-9). Apart from the meeting on a public road, however, I fail to see any grounds for comparison. The most significant features of Paul's experience--Christ's reference to Paul's persecution of him and Paul's being struck blind by the confrontation--are absent from Wordsworth's. While the poet's experience has, like many in The Prelude, mythic reverberations, as I have suggested, I do not feel that it can bear the weight of the Biblical comparison.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 69-77.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 69-71.

<sup>63</sup>Jacobi, "Symbols in an Individual Analysis," Man and His Symbols, ed. Jung, 335.

<sup>64</sup>Campbell, 71.

<sup>65</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 181.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>67</sup>Campbell, 245.

<sup>68</sup>Jacobi, Jolande, "Symbols in an Individual Analysis," Man and His Symbols, ed. C.G. Jung, 334.

<sup>69</sup>The identity between the womb as the place where life originates and of the tomb as the place where life ends is a favourite truism of typological criticism; the phrase "life-in-death" is, of course, borrowed from "The Ancient Mariner" (193).



<sup>70</sup>Curtius, 192.

<sup>71</sup>Campbell, 97.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>74</sup>Wordsworth's treatment of the "City" in this passage is an interesting example of the mythic fusion of several empirical objects into a single archetypal image. DeSelincourt tells us that though "the city he is actually leaving is Bristol, 'the prison where he hath been long immured' (8), 'the vast city where I long had pined' (1850, 7) is London." The opening lines of Book VII, furthermore, where there is a reference to the "glad preamble" of Book I and to the "City's Walls" from which he was "issuing" at the time (VII, 3-4) may even be intended to include an oblique reference to Goslar, Germany. See DeSelincourt, p. 280.

<sup>75</sup>Jacobi, Jolande, "Symbols in an Individual Analysis," Man and His Symbols, ed. C.G.Jung, 335.

<sup>76</sup>Campbell, 246.

<sup>77</sup>Wordsworth, however, was not anti-intellectual, as Havens rightly insists, for he had a respect for learned men and learning, but he was anti-rational, i.e. through trial and error he arrived at the conclusion that the truth cannot be reached by the divided and dividing intellect but only by the whole man in whom all the faculties, affections and senses work harmoniously. Havens quotes from a letter of Wordsworth in which he says, "One of the main objects of The Recluse is to reduce the calculating understanding to its proper level among the human faculties" (to Mrs. Clarkson, December, 1814), 148.

<sup>78</sup>Campbell, 109.

<sup>79</sup>DeSelincourt's Notes to The Prelude (1805), 297.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 297.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 298.



<sup>82</sup>Campbell, 111.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 259.

<sup>84</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 223.

<sup>85</sup>Elizabeth Sewall in The Human Metaphor reminds us, in her discussion of Wordsworth, that the concept of the relationship between man and nature as a "marriage" is by no means original, that Bacon, for example, spoke of "the bridal chamber of the Mind and the Universe," but in his metaphor the mind as man dominates over nature as woman, whereas in Wordsworth's the relationship is one of "mutual interpenetration," 81.

<sup>86</sup>See especially Campbell, 40-41, and Eliade, Images and Symbols, 39-46.

<sup>87</sup>Jacobi, Jolande, "Symbols in an Individual Analysis," Man and His Symbols, ed. C.G.Jung, 361.

<sup>88</sup>Harrison, 23.

<sup>89</sup>Campbell, 229.

<sup>90</sup>There is a considerable body of writing by members of the Jungian school on the significance of the stone as a symbol of the Self, and relating it to the lapis philosophorum as a symbol of Christ. See especially Jung's Mysterium Coniunctionis, passim.

<sup>91</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 158.

<sup>92</sup>Campbell, 251.

<sup>93</sup>MacLean, 381.

<sup>94</sup>Campbell, 193.





Chapter VII

<sup>1</sup>See Campbell, pp. 126-129 passim.

<sup>2</sup>Neumann's term. See Origins and History, Introduction, xvii.

<sup>3</sup>Brinton, 77.

<sup>4</sup>Gordon, 4.

<sup>5</sup>Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Dec. [for January] 3, 181[1], Letters, I, 35.

<sup>6</sup>Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Jan. 12, 1811, Letters, I, 44.

<sup>7</sup>Stovall, 32.

<sup>8</sup>Brinton, 165.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>10</sup>Campbell, 352.

<sup>11</sup>Shelley, Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists, Works, V, 265.

<sup>12</sup>Cameron, "Social Philosophy of Shelley," 457.

<sup>13</sup>Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Dec. 20, 1810, Letters, I, 28.

<sup>14</sup>Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, [Jan. 1, 1811], Letters, I, 34.

<sup>15</sup>Cameron, "Social Philosophy of Shelley," 461.



<sup>16</sup>Santayana, Essays in Literary Criticism, 188.

<sup>17</sup>See Weaver, "Shelley: The First Beginnings," Philological Quarterly, XXXII (1953), 184-196.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>19</sup>Cameron (ed.), Esdaile Notebook, 5.

<sup>20</sup>Brinton, 176.

<sup>21</sup>Cameron (ed.), Esdaile Notebook, 40.

<sup>22</sup>Shelley, Reform, 28.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>26</sup>Baynes, 323.

<sup>27</sup>Campbell, 129.

<sup>28</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 138.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 172-173.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 142. See also Campbell who relates the father to spirit and the mother to matter (materia), 113.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 186-187.





<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 182.

<sup>34</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 174.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 174.

<sup>37</sup>May, Existential Psychotherapy, 28.

<sup>38</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 190.

<sup>39</sup>Moore, 24-32 passim.

<sup>40</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, 3.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>42</sup>MacDonald, 14.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>44</sup>Gordon, 7-8.

<sup>45</sup>Shelley to Godwin, Jan. 16, 1812, Letters, I, 230.

<sup>46</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, 2.

<sup>47</sup>White, Shelley, 56.

<sup>48</sup>Stovall, 32.

<sup>49</sup>White, Shelley, 84.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 54.



<sup>51</sup>Stovall, 27.

<sup>52</sup>Shelley to Timothy Shelley, Oct. 12, 1811, Letters, I, 146.

<sup>53</sup>Shelley, Notes to Queen Mab, Works, I, 154.

<sup>54</sup>Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener, Dec. 10, 1811, Letters, I, 200.

<sup>55</sup>Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, May 8, 1811, Letters, I, 79.

<sup>56</sup>Shelley to Timothy Shelley, Sept. 27, 1811, Letters, I, 142.

<sup>57</sup>Shelley to Timothy Shelley, Oct. 15, 1811, Letters, I, 148-149.

<sup>58</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, 5.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>60</sup>Stovall, 14.

<sup>61</sup>Gordon, 6.

<sup>62</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, 9.

<sup>63</sup>White, Shelley, 11.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>65</sup>MacDonald, 26.

<sup>66</sup>Guinn, 11.

<sup>67</sup>Shelley to Peacock, Jan. 24, 1819, Letters, II, 71.

<sup>68</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, Introduction, xi.



<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>71</sup>Shelley, Address to the Irish People, Works, V, 237-238.

<sup>72</sup>Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 26, 1812, Letters, I, 239.

<sup>73</sup>Cameron, Young Shelley, 141.

<sup>74</sup>Shelley, Address, Works, V, 232.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 234.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 234.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>79</sup>Shelley, A Philosophical View of Reform, 72.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>83</sup>Shelley, Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists, Works, V, 260.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 264-265.

<sup>85</sup>Brinton, 167.





<sup>86</sup>Shelley, Reform, 17.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>88</sup>Shelley, Works, I, 241.

<sup>89</sup>See Apocalyptic Vision, pp. 3-72 passim.

<sup>90</sup>Barnard, 15.

<sup>91</sup>See Notopoulos, 6.

<sup>92</sup>Notopoulos, 4.

<sup>93</sup>See E.J. Rose, "Blake's Milton: The Poet as Poem," Blake Studies, I, No. 1 (Fall, 1968), 16-38.

<sup>94</sup>Notopoulos, 13.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>97</sup>Shelley, Defence of Poetry, Works, VIII, 112.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>101</sup>Woodman, 3-22 passim.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Shelley, Defence of Poetry, Works, VII, 140.



<sup>104</sup>Woodman, 40.

<sup>105</sup>Shelley to Hogg, January 31, 1811, Letters, I, 35-36.

<sup>106</sup>Shelley, Reform, 6-7.

<sup>107</sup>Barnard, 156.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>109</sup>Shelley, Works, VII, 87.

<sup>110</sup>Shelley, Works, VI, 235.

<sup>111</sup>Barnard, 241.

<sup>112</sup>Jonas, 92.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>114</sup>Shelley, Works, VII, 91.

<sup>115</sup>Jonas, 96.

<sup>116</sup>Shelley, Defence of Poetry, Works, VII, 140.

## Chapter VIII

<sup>1</sup>Frye, English Romanticism, 91.

<sup>2</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 178.

<sup>3</sup>Shelley, Notes to Queen Mab, Works, I, 144.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 144.





<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>6</sup>Shelley, An Essay on Christianity, Works, VI, 231.

<sup>7</sup>May, Love and Will, 182.

<sup>8</sup>Freud, General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, 95 (quoted by May, 183).

<sup>9</sup>May, Love and Will, 183.

<sup>10</sup>Shelley, A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancients, Works, VII, 228.

<sup>11</sup>May, Love and Will, 122-177, passim.

<sup>12</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 181.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. Shelley's "Note on Alastor," Works, I, 198.

<sup>15</sup>Shelley, Preface to Alastor, Works, I, 173.

<sup>16</sup>Baker, 47.

<sup>17</sup>Reiter, 14-15.

<sup>18</sup>Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 324.

<sup>19</sup>Shelley, Preface to Alastor, Works, I, 173.

<sup>20</sup>For a discussion of the "fundamental divergence" between dream and reality in Shelley's relationship with the opposite sex see Margaret Crompton: Shelley's Dream Women.

<sup>21</sup>Mrs. Shelley's "Note on Alastor," Works, I, 198.



<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 198.

<sup>23</sup>Shelley, Preface to Alastor, Works, I, 173.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>25</sup>Baker, 42.

<sup>26</sup>Shelley, Preface to Alastor, Works, I, 174.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>29</sup>Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship, 67.

<sup>30</sup>Reiter, 52-53.

<sup>31</sup>Shelley to Godwin, Dec. 11, 1817, Letters, I, 577.

<sup>32</sup>Shelley, Preface to The Revolt of Islam, Works, I, 239.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 240.

<sup>34</sup>Reiter, 50.

<sup>35</sup>M.-L. Von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in Man and His Symbols, ed. Jung, 198.

<sup>36</sup>See G. Samuel, The Christ Figure in Blake and Shelley, pp. 146-173.

<sup>37</sup>See Revelation 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13.

<sup>38</sup>Grabo, 13.



<sup>39</sup>Shelley, The Defence of Poetry, Works, VII, 124.

<sup>40</sup>Wasserman, 65. (Shelley himself uses the term "archetype" in a sense very close to the sense in which Jung uses it: "This object [the ideal erotic partner], or its archetype, forever exists in the mind, which selects among those who resemble it, that which most resembles it . . . ." See Works, VII, 228.)

<sup>41</sup>Eliade, Images and Symbols, 40.

<sup>42</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 261.

<sup>43</sup>Butter, 170-171.

<sup>44</sup>Grabo, 15.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell, 352.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 352-353.

<sup>47</sup>Frye, English Romanticism, 97.

<sup>48</sup>Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns, 256.

<sup>49</sup>Grabo, 36.

<sup>50</sup>Shelley, An Essay on Christianity, Works, VI, 236.

<sup>51</sup>Knight, Christian Renaissance, 237-238.

<sup>52</sup>Marshall, 44.

<sup>53</sup>See E. J. Rose, "Shelley Reconsidered Plain," Bucknell Review, XIV (May, 1966), p. 62-63.

<sup>54</sup>That is, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses (See Matthew 27:55).





<sup>55</sup>For an explanation of the anima as mediator between the collective unconscious and the conscious, see M.-L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in Man and His Symbols, ed. Jung, 193.

<sup>56</sup>I refer to Demogorgon as "he" only as a concession to traditional criticism. I am convinced that she is either feminine or, at most, androgynous. Such a view seems to me, perhaps as a result of a feminist bias befitting a Shelley critic, to be more consistent with the evolution of Shelley's myth for three reasons: First, as Prometheus is the final transformation of the epipsyche, Demogorgon is the final transformation of the Power which in Queen Mab Shelley calls "the mother of the world" (VI, 198); second, as a "veiled form" seated on a throne and who has to be reached by means of a journey backward and down to an inner centre, she has a typological identity both with Keats' Moneta and Shelley's own Cythna; third, as a poet highly sensitive to the etymological connotations of words, Shelley was surely deliberate in evoking the suggestion of a "gorgon," the female monster of Greek myth, the best-known version of which is Medusa, the serpents covering whose head are recalled by the serpent coiled beneath Demogorgon's throne, which in its turn is a recurrence of the serpent motif with its feminine associations in Alastor. Critical precedents for regarding Demogorgon as at least androgynous are to be found in Carlos Baker: Shelley's Major Poetry (p. 116) and A. Wormhoudt: The Demon Lover (p. 99).

<sup>57</sup>Frye, English Romanticism, 103.

## Chapter IX

<sup>1</sup>Neumann, Origins and History, 220.

<sup>2</sup>This point has been discussed at some length by Harold Bloom in "Keats and the Embarrassments of Poetic Tradition." See Hilles and Bloom, From Sensibility to Romanticism, pp. 513-526. Bate also speaks of the "embarrassment" that the "fearful legacy" of the past was to Keats. See p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>To George and Thomas Keats, Dec. 21, 1817, Letters, I, 193.

<sup>4</sup>To Benjamin Bailey, Nov., 22, 1817, Letters, I, 184.

<sup>5</sup>To Richard Woodhouse, Oct., 27, 1818, Letters, I, 387.



<sup>6</sup>To Sir John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818, Letters, I, 281.

<sup>7</sup>To George and Georgiana Keats, Feb. 14-May 3, 1819, Letters, II, 102.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 102-103.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>13</sup>To George and Thomas Keats, Dec. 21, 1817, Letters, I, 192.

<sup>14</sup>In a letter to Shelley on August 16, 1820 (Letters, II, 323) Keats speaks of Endymion as the product of a mind which "was like a pack of scattered cards."

<sup>15</sup>To Benjamin Bailey, Nov. 22, 1817, Letters, I, 184-185.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>18</sup>To John Hamilton Reynolds, Jan. 31, 1818, Letters, I, 221.

<sup>19</sup>To John Hamilton Reynolds, March 25, 1818, Letters, I, 259-263.

<sup>20</sup>Endymion was harshly reviewed in Blackwood's Magazine (August, 1818) and The Quarterly Review (April, 1818). See Forman, Works, II, 244-259.

<sup>21</sup>To George and Georgiana Keats, Feb. 14-May 3, 1819, Letters, II, 101-104.





<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>23</sup>Sewell, 126.

<sup>24</sup>Bate, Keats, 3.

<sup>25</sup>Van Ghent, 7-25.

<sup>26</sup>Chayes, "Dreamer," 515.

<sup>27</sup>Wilson, K., 9.

<sup>28</sup>The reader may recall that the shell image also appears in Book V ("Books") of The Prelude in indirect association with the nurturing of the imagination by tales of phantasy.

<sup>29</sup>Thorburn, 78-79.

<sup>30</sup>Wilson, K., 18.

<sup>31</sup>Bate, Keats, 191.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>33</sup>To John Taylor, Jan. 30, 1818, Letters, I, 218.

<sup>34</sup>The subterranean realm in which Endymion encounters the mother of the gods has much in common with the realm of "The Mothers" referred to by Mephistopheles in Part Two of Goethe's Faust.

<sup>35</sup>The relationship between the "golden fruit" and the "muddy lees" that Keats intuitively here seems to me to herald Freud's well-known theory that the spiritual values upon which civilization depends are the products of the sublimation of unconscious physiological drives, especially since the transformation in Endymion's perspective which makes "essences/ Once spiritual" seem "like muddy lees" follows upon an intensely erotic experience in which he had been "Drunken from pleasure's nipple" (II, 869).



<sup>36</sup>Jung (ed.), Man and His Symbols, 207-208. (Note the similarity between Glaucus and Wordsworth's leech-gatherer, who is also associated with the sea.)

## Chapter X

<sup>1</sup>To George and Georgiana Keats, Feb.14-May 3, 1819, Letters II, 103.

<sup>2</sup>To John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818, Letters, I, 282.

<sup>3</sup>To Benjamin Robert Haydon, Jan. 23, 1818, Letters, I, 207.

<sup>4</sup>Preface to Endymion, Works, II, 12.

<sup>5</sup>I am aware that the extent to which Blake assimilated "tradition" is controversial. His indebtedness to it has recently been defended by Kathleen Raine in Blake and Tradition, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

<sup>6</sup>Van Ghent, 7.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>8</sup>Evert, 23.

<sup>9</sup>To Robert Benjamin Haydon, Jan. 23, 1818, Letters, I, 207.

<sup>10</sup>To George and Georgiana Keats, Feb. 14-May 3, 1819, Letters, II, 79-80.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>13</sup>Neumann, 9.



<sup>14</sup>Van Ghent sees Saturn's sleep as a type of the "sleep-healing" formula of archaic ritual. See "Keats' Myth of the Hero," p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>Keats told Woodhouse (Rollins, Keats' Circle, I, 129) that this passage "seemed to come by chance or magic--to be as it were something given to him". This is an obvious example of what Jung calls the "autonomous" functioning of the unconscious.

<sup>16</sup>Booom, Visionary Company, 389.

<sup>17</sup>Wilson, K., 89-90.

<sup>18</sup>Chayes, "Dreamer," 500.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 499-515, passim.

<sup>20</sup>"The rite of eating and drinking together . . . is clearly a rite of incorporation, of physical union, and has been called a sacrament of communion." See Genep, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup>Wilson, K., 112-113.

<sup>22</sup>Jung, (ed.), Man and His Symbols, 113.

<sup>23</sup>Wilson, K., 153.

<sup>24</sup>Bate, Keats, 597.

<sup>25</sup>Chayes, "Dreamer," 505.

<sup>26</sup>See Evert, 23-87 passim.

<sup>27</sup>This is the opening line of a curious passage in which the poet, using the traditional association of Apollo with plagues, launches an attack on contemporary poets, including himself. I confess that I do not know what to make of the passage, and Keats himself decided it was out of place and deleted it, along with the six foregoing lines. (See Bate, p. 599). The association of Apollo with healing on the one hand, and "misty pestilence" on the other, while true to "the beautiful mythology of Greece," is not often used by poets, and suggests





to me an unconscious ambivalence in the poet's attitude to the values represented by the figure he consciously chose as his hero. Such an interpretation, perhaps rather too conveniently to be valid, supports my contention that throughout the poem the unconscious is undermining the conscious intentions of the poet.

<sup>28</sup>Van Ghent relates the parting of the veils here to the Orphic ritual of "passing through the robes" of an underworld goddess. See p. 12.

<sup>29</sup>Shelley, Defence of Poetry, Works, VII, 115.

## Chapter XI

<sup>1</sup>Neumann, Origin and History, 131

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, 388.

<sup>4</sup>Neumann, Origin and History, 220.

<sup>5</sup>Neumann (p. 256) and Campbell (p. 390) both speak of this "shift in the center of gravity."

<sup>6</sup>Campbell, 391.



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